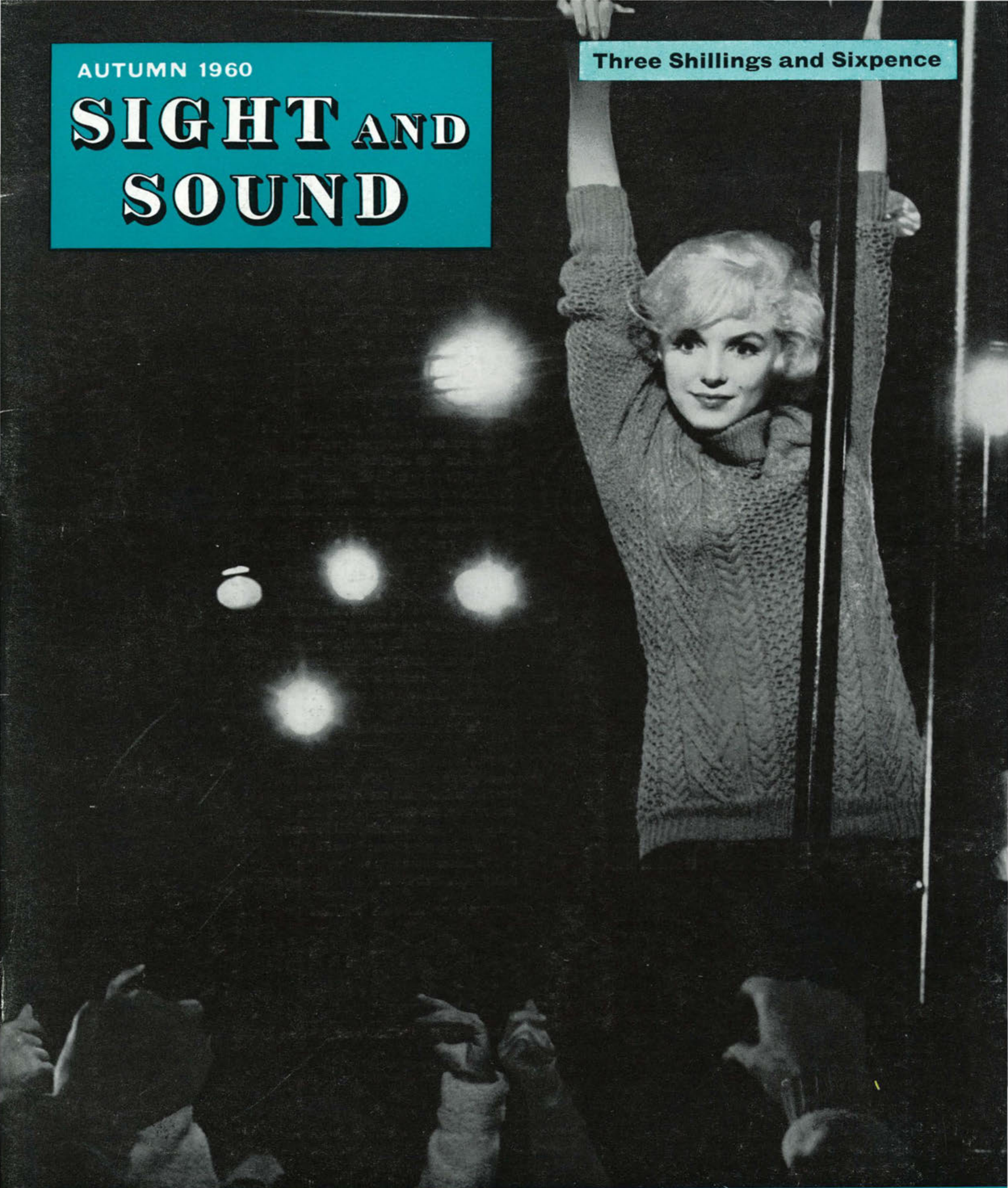


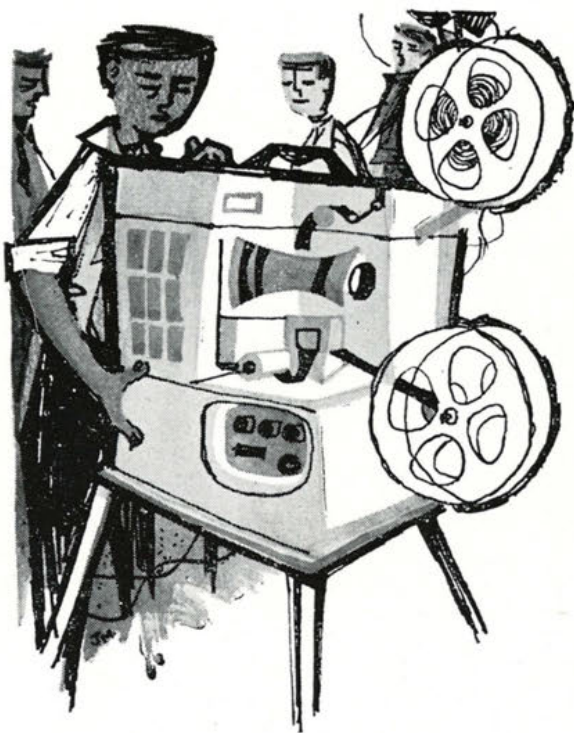
AUTUMN 1960

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The Film Quarterly



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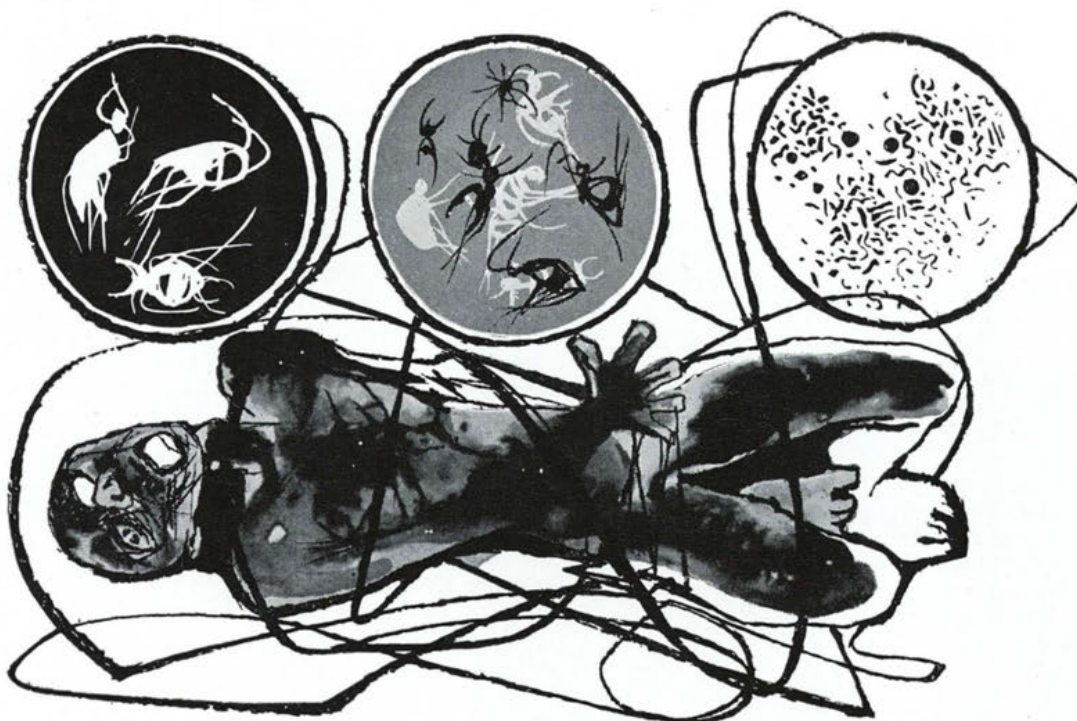
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SIGHT AND SOUND

The International Film Quarterly

VOLUME 29 No. 4 AUTUMN 1960

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Yves Montand and Lee Remick in "Sanctuary", an adaptation of the Faulkner novel which Tony Richardson is directing for Fox in Hollywood.

THE FRONT PAGE

THE CENSORSHIP DEBATE has been vigorously revived during the last few months. Derek Hill's long and detailed article in *Encounter* touched it off; William Whitebait took it up in the *New Statesman*; John Trevelyan, Secretary of the British Board of Film Censors, has replied to both articles; and a question in the House of Commons, from Mr. Stephen Swinger, elicited a characteristic comment from the Home Secretary. "On the whole," said Mr. Butler, "the non-statutory form of censorship at present exercised for the films is probably as good as we can get."

The opponents of censorship have been attacking on two fronts: that of principle and that of practice. On the one hand, although most people agree that some form of protective censorship is desirable as far as children are concerned, there is the argument that films for adults should not be cut. On the other, there is the evidence of how censorship operates in relation to specific films, such as the East German documentaries which the censor has refused to let us see, or the much-quoted case of *Spare the Rod* which—if we are to believe one story—he more or less discouraged from being made. One issue which has found surprisingly little place in the discussion concerns the theory on which our censorship operates. Its basis: nothing ought to be shown on a public screen which is considered likely to give offence to reasonable people.

Like many such definitions, this one has the advantage as well as the disadvantage of extreme vagueness. The BBFC obviously considers—and probably has grounds for doing so—that the reasonable man of 1960 is prepared to take a good deal more than the reasonable man of 1955. In fact, the evidence of television, and of what people are prepared to accept without protest on the TV screen, has probably done quite a bit towards liberalising film censorship. But what, when we come down to it, does "giving offence" mean? The standards applied when a book is brought before the courts are considerably more rigorous: to prove obscene libel, the prosecution must convince the jury that the work may deprave and corrupt those into whose hands it is likely to fall. In other words, evidence has to be produced that the book runs the risk of doing positive harm. And it would be hard to argue that "to give offence"—whether this means to upset, to enrage, to shock or literally to sicken—is positively to harm. The disadvantage of the film system, put briefly, is that it

assumes a cinema designed basically for entertainment. It does not make life easier for the artist. And part of the artist's function through the centuries, it could be argued, has been precisely that of giving necessary offence to reasonable people.

In practice, the BBFC applies its test through its examiners. These are not specialists, and the Board never in fact asks for expert advice—from, for instance, a child psychologist or a sociologist. Its examiners are people who have as a rule some experience of public service and who are broad-minded enough to operate the system in a tolerably liberal sense. But their criteria, in the end, can only be subjective ones: they are going on their own instinct and experience.

That they should have to do so exposes one of the really big gaps in our knowledge. In the long run, whether censorship is being operated by a board of examiners or by a jury in the courts, the criteria are bound to be subjective. But the jury, at least, can now hear expert opinions for the defence. In the cinema, we are all largely in the dark. Is violence on the screen, for instance, something that releases tensions, or does it stimulate actual violence? Is suggestion more or less harmful than statement; and does it really make any difference whether a killer is seen striking four blows or ten? Is it even true that the combination of image and sound is so infinitely more potent than the written word that it cannot be allowed the same freedom?

It can fairly be argued that these are unanswerable questions, in the sense that no two people will react in exactly the same way to what they see. But research can at least endeavour to suggest answers, to find out more nearly what effect a film may have on its public. And, except as far as child audiences are concerned, this is all mainly uncharted territory. The film industry has conducted extraordinarily little straight market research on its own account. Sociologists and academic workers have mostly left the cinema alone. From every point of view, it would be immensely valuable if a major research project into the subject of the cinema and its adult audience could be financed and undertaken. In the area of censorship—which would not, of course, be the only one such a survey should illuminate—ammunition might be provided for either side in the debate. But it would be real ammunition, and it might clear away some of the mist that hangs over the battlefield.



THE CRITICAL

Nicholas Ray's cinema: "The Savage Innocents".

"The English critic, always protesting that the drama should not be didactic, and yet always complaining if the dramatist does not find sermons in stones and good in everything . . ."—BERNARD SHAW

WAS SHAW RIGHT, and has the English critic a constant, if concealed, longing for the right-minded work, the play or film or novel with its moral lessons as firmly and unambiguously stitched in as those of a nineteenth-century sampler? Sometimes it seems so, when the nanny instinct that lurks somewhere in most critical consciences rises to the surface and the reader is warned off the cruel or the depressing in entertainment as though being counselled against taking sweets from strange men. (Only nanny, who has never had much of a sense of humour, could so signally have failed to see the joke of *Psycho*.) On the whole, though, nanny knows her place. The governing characteristic of English critical writing, rather, seems to be its empiricism, its innate distrust of theory and reluctance to draw demarcation lines. The aspiring critic naïve enough to ask advice is likely to be given it succinctly. His job: to make up his mind about what the artist was trying to do; then to consider how well he has done it. The third question is the dangerous one: was it really worth doing in the first place? To ask it implies that the critic is judging the work not "on its own merits" (that favourite, elusive English phrase) but according to some system of values; that, in fact, he has a theory.

Exactly four years ago, Lindsay Anderson's article "Stand Up! Stand Up!" was published in this magazine. In some quarters it was greeted as a significant statement of principle, its insistence that the dangerous third question could not be evaded being accepted as a statement of something self-evidently true although too often neglected. In other areas, Mr. Anderson was welcomed rather like a bowler caught

throwing in a test match. The method might take a wicket or two, but wasn't he trying to impose his own reading of the rules of the game? In any case, the argument about commitment was on; and it has been with us ever since. The commitment question still remains central to any discussion of a critical theory. But there has been so much misunderstanding and confusion about just what the expression ought to mean, more particularly about how Lindsay Anderson interpreted it and where people thought this interpretation was leading, that a certain restatement is still necessary.

Questions of Commitment

"STAND UP! STAND UP!" CALLED INTO QUESTION THE NOT uncommon idea that a critic should somehow be able to separate the analytical, appreciative, professional side of his personality from the rest of his attitudes to life. In itself, of course, the idea is an illusion: there is no such thing as entirely objective, unbiased criticism; there is only critical writing (and not a great deal of it at that) which aspires to this condition. But the critic who will gaily admit his personal quirks of taste just because these help to build up his image, his personality as it addresses itself to the reader, will keep tactfully quiet about where he stands on the larger issues. He will make moral judgments (on films like *Peeping Tom*) more easily than social ones (on films like *The Angry Silence*). He will attack what he feels to be dangerously vicious while tolerantly letting pass what he knows to be as insidiously damaging in its encouragement of snap reactions and slipshod thinking.

Lindsay Anderson is not an Englishman, and he has none of the English respect for words like "fair" and "balanced" and "impartial". With all a Scot's distrust of compromise, he took the critical writing of four years ago to task for its undefined liberalism and asked it to declare its principles: he

QUESTION

PENELOPE HOUSTON



... or Satyajit Ray's cinema: "The World of Apu".

wanted values to be openly admitted. Some of the misunderstanding began here. How, he was asked, could he properly review a film such as the Nazi *Triumph of the Will* or the Catholic *Journal d'un Curé de Campagne*? These films' quality was in their "use of the medium"; and wasn't a critic's expressed dislike of the ideologies they reflected going to cloud his perception? This sort of question in itself shows a striking lack of appreciation of how the disciplines of criticism operate. The critic does not have to agree with a case to know whether it is being well or badly stated; he does not have to find the Bernanos-Bresson ethos, with its masochistic self-questioning, a sympathetic one (he may even find it repellent) to appreciate that *Journal d'un Curé* is a masterpiece of resolute conviction. He can admire without agreeing and agree without admiring. And although this ought to be self-evident, apparently it has not been.

The belief—more often it looks like a pretence—that one can somehow write a sounder review of a film by keeping to style and method, by not bothering to work out what its motive force may be, is surprisingly influential. *Triumph of the Will* is the kind of film brought up as an example; and if ever an example boomeranged against those who introduce it, then this is the one. No critic can overlook the film's brilliance, its electric authority. Anyone who feels that it should be reviewed *primarily* in terms of technique rather than for its unique value as a document of Nazism triumphant has somehow failed to establish contact with the century in which he is living. Maybe there are those who prefer it that way.

There is no point in discussing here the arguments for committed criticism. They ought to be familiar enough by now. And Lindsay Anderson's article, in any case, was not only—was not perhaps even *primarily*—an attempt to elucidate a theory. It was also a call to arms, an appeal to the critics to

stand up and be counted. Mr. Anderson made no secret of his own commitments, which are Left Wing, though in the humane rather than the actively political sense; and, by implication, he has since made it apparent that he is not greatly concerned with other people's commitments unless they coincide more or less with his own.

Although the critical profession traditionally occupies a position somewhat left of centre, the critics as a whole did not relish being told that they ought to be radicals. In all the arts, in the eyes of its upholders and in those of its opponents, committed criticism effectively means Left Wing criticism. If you say that you are committed, you are also saying (or are thought to be saying) that you are a socialist; and this makes it impossible to consider the critical problem without relating it to some of the wider issues of life in this country.

"Stand Up! Stand Up!" was not simply an isolated article: it was part of an atmosphere which may be evoked through the names of half a dozen groups and organisations: the Royal Court Theatre, Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop, Free Cinema, *Universities and Left Review* (now the *New Left Review*), *Encore*, *Tribune*, the Aldermaston marches. During the last half of the Fifties, most of the creative and energetic thinking directed to that point where politics and culture meet has been orientated towards the Left. There has been nothing that could precisely be defined as a movement, but there has been constant interaction. Meanwhile, socialism in the country at large has steadily been losing ground. The 1959 election was a turning point; and the *New Statesman's* election-eve comment that, whatever the result, the campaign would prove to have been a triumph for Labour, only underlined the distance between illusion and reality. Since the election, all the divisions within the Labour Party have been paraded before the electorate; a split of which rather less has been made is that

between the young, radical, socially critical faction (who have their allies also on the Right) and the politicians of the Left. The gap between political practice and quasi-political thinking can seldom have been wider: the Young Left, which has found its Osbornes and Weskers, its Bergers and Tynans, has yet to find its politicians.

This is hardly the climate of optimism, which means that a brave, essentially hopeful gesture such as Arnold Wesker's attempt to interest the unions in the arts seems all the more encouraging. What Wesker is attempting may not work, and he knows it, but the effort itself is magnificently positive. But Wesker gives the impression of having some of the confidence that moves mountains; and there is not a great deal of that around. Rather, there is an air of disillusionment, a soured, disapproving frustration, which is the mood least helpful not only to creative endeavour but to good writing of any kind. The critic who appears a congenital nagger and disapprover, who tries to bully and hector art into following the path he would like it to take, is more of a liability than a help to his cause.

The worst enemy, it sometimes seems, of commitment in criticism is the writing of some of those who carry its banner. There is, for instance, the lunatic theory, occasionally paraded, that art *only* becomes meaningful if it has something directly to say to the ordinary man. Many writers, in this magazine and elsewhere, have appealed for a cinema and theatre more closely related to life as we are currently experiencing it, an appreciation of the ordinary as subject matter. But the idea that art cannot also afford to be difficult, esoteric, private, would take us into the sphere of the cultural *gauleiters*. Then there is the theatre critic who will lambast a depressingly bad drawing-room comedy one week, because this is decadent bourgeois entertainment, and will find virtue next week in a no less pitiful farce because this, at least, has the "honest vulgarity" that the man in the street enjoys. This is the special pleading of criticism, the setting up of a double standard.

In the cinema, opponents of the committed approach claim that the double standard again operates. Technique, they say, is dangerously devalued: a badly made film is forgiven its faults if its approach is found sympathetic. This is difficult

territory and one can only make a personal comment. Should the critic write a selling notice of a work which he believes deserves encouragement, or should he be stringent in pointing out its weaknesses? My own belief: enthusiasm is essential to the critic, and where he feels it he must communicate it. Incompetence deserves no quarter, but when the promise is unmistakable, and the effort to grapple with a subject not merely in terms of technique but of trying to understand the truth about it, then the time to start making a major issue of what went wrong is with the artist's second or third film.

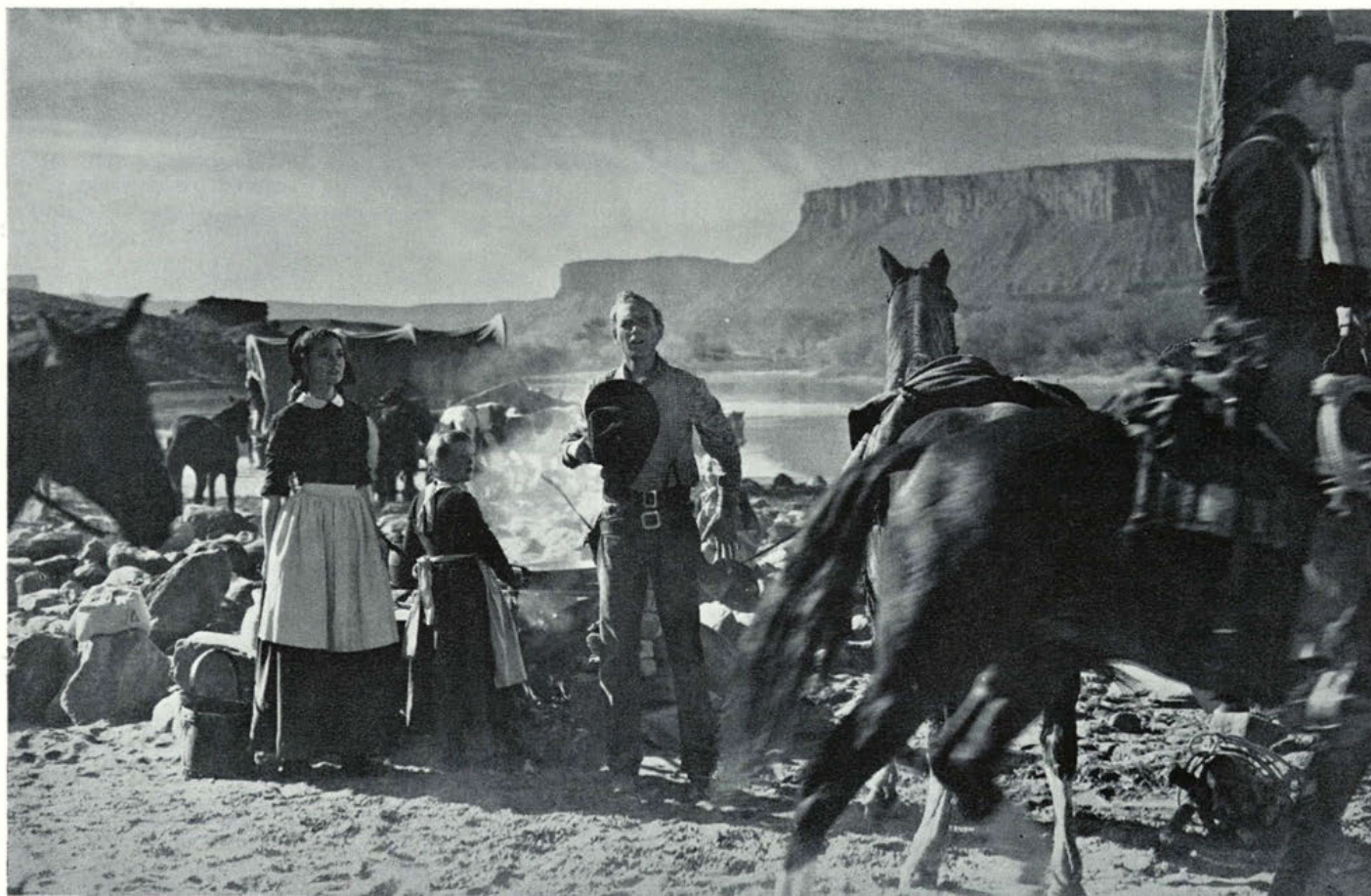
Living in the Dark

CHANGES IN CRITICAL ATTITUDES ARE NOT MERELY INEVITABLE but absolutely necessary, since art keeps alive through a constant process of re-evaluation and reassessment. It is through this process that criticism ought to stimulate creation; and it is through it that the "masterpieces" that take a clique or a critical group or a whole generation by storm are re-valued for the future. There should be no final judgments in criticism.

If a new generation is emerging in film criticism in this country, some of its first stirrings may be visible in an undergraduate magazine, *Oxford Opinion* (it is now twelve years since *Sequence* came out of Oxford), in the letters that reach *SIGHT AND SOUND* from young writers or would-be writers, in more or less vague hints and indications. As might be expected, by the natural process of reaction, the new mood is directly opposed to the one that preceded it. Its allegiance is solely to the cinema; its heroes are directors also greatly admired by the younger generation of French critics (Nicholas Ray, Samuel Fuller, Douglas Sirk, Frank Tashlin); its concern is essentially with the cinema as a director's medium. The general attitudes are extremely close to those of the French critics, which are discussed in detail elsewhere in this issue; but some brief statement of them is necessary here.

Insisting that criticism as generally practised pays over-much attention to script, story, acting performances, subject generally, they have themselves swung to the opposite extreme. All this is irrelevant, something cinema shares with

Worthy of a cult . . . ? A scene from John Ford's "Wagonmaster".



the other arts; what must be isolated is the special, elusive quality that is the cinema's own, and that can be found in the way a sequence is lit, the way space is manipulated, the way a mood can be transmitted through the choice of camera angles and the pacing of a scene.

So far, so good. Here is *Oxford Opinion* on Samuel Fuller, director of the current cult "masterpiece" *The Crimson Kimono*: "Fuller is at his best, i.e. most beautiful, when his ideas are at their least inspired—in *Steel Helmet*, the most exciting images came when he was producing total nonsense." On *Comanche Station*, a B-Western very favourably reviewed: "*Comanche Station* does not use its structure as a framework for ideas. In fact it has almost nothing to say . . ." On Nicholas Ray's sense of composition: "In *Party Girl* there is a shot of a girl lying with her hands dangling in a bath full of water which is red from the blood of her slashed wrists. Even by Ray standards it is outstandingly beautiful." On Anthony Mann: "He seems to me to be far worthier of a cult than John Ford; at least Mann never made a dull movie." And, not unexpectedly, on SIGHT AND SOUND: "It is only a pretty typical product of an approach to films that is fundamentally perverted . . ."

Perverted, perhaps, but not blind to what the new critical school—if that is not too pompous a phrase for it—are after. There are no good or bad subjects; affirmation is a word for boy scouts; social significance is a bore; don't expect a film to present you with sympathetic characters; don't even, if one takes it far enough, look for character; don't have any truck with anything that smacks of literature. Cinema, by this definition, means first and foremost the visual image; and the critic's response is to the excitement it can communicate.

A lot of this comes from *Cahiers du Cinéma*, along with the list of admired directors. And it is this list itself, as much as the way in which the films are discussed—don't look to these reviews for analysis, but rather for a series of slightly breathless statements—that underlines fundamental divergences of viewpoint. A letter from Ian Jarvie, one of the more articulate of the younger writers although not attached to the Oxford group, gave us a hint two years ago: "The young take odd, isolated, almost idiosyncratic lines like: preferring later Hitchcock to the pre-war vintage, enjoying the fast, tough (perhaps sadistic?) gangster film, rhapsodising over Nazi films, being bored with neo-realism and Free Cinema . . ." Nicholas Ray or Satyajit Ray? Samuel Fuller or John Ford?

Here, we are reaching the main area of disagreement. Methods of criticism are not the most significant point, since no one, however resolutely disinterested in subject matter, can avoid coming to grips sooner or later with the question of what a film is about. The limitation of the aesthetic approach, finally, is that it simply won't work: reviewing a film in terms of half a dozen striking shots, and of what their emotional impact and technical brilliance meant to you, is like walking in a fog without a torch. The mist of images swirls around, landmarks are obscured, without realising it one progresses in a series of circles. Cinema is about the human situation, not about "spatial relationships".

What the young critics mainly admire, however, are films whose relation to the business of living is in itself somewhat precarious. You cannot write, for instance, about a film like *Pather Panchali* (or *Les Quatre Cents Coups*, or *The Tokyo Story*) without concerning yourself with the way in which certain truths about the relationships between people, and the place of these people in their society, are defined on the screen. The film is not enclosed within its circumference; it is not retreating behind any protective hedge of "art". *The Crimson Kimono*, however, which is pulp literature with (oddly enough) some stabs at a social conscience, is a film which can only be admired in terms of its immediate impact. We would be a prim and dismal lot if we denied admiration to this kind of cinema, though I would not myself choose *Crimson Kimono* as an example. But we all have a way of constructing general theories on the basis of particular admirations; and a theory of criticism constructed around an appreciation of *Crimson*

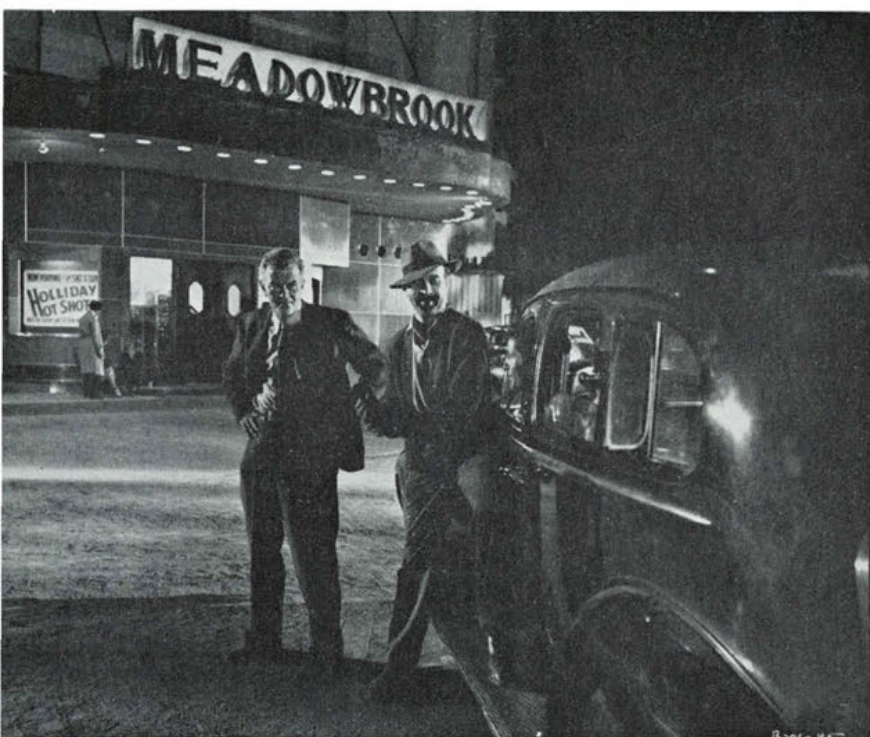


The 'black' thriller with an edge of conscience. Humphrey Bogart in Howard Hawks' "*The Big Sleep*".

Kimono, or *Party Girl*, or *Written on the Wind*, seems to me a distinctly barren one.

Extreme skill, working on subject matter of whatever banality, can produce an intoxicating excitement of its own; and because the conditions of film-making are such that almost no creative worker in the cinema can be a full-time artist, we are all used to finding some of our excitement in part-time art—in seeing, that is, what the first-rate talent can do with the third-rate subject, even in watching how he can work against the subject to communicate something of his own. In the American cinema, especially, the big subject often intimidates; it is the casual glances at reality which are more telling. To pass from this, however, to a belief that the subject itself is always irrelevant is to make a preposterous leap. And, in this context, one suspects that the subjects are not as irrelevant as all that. "Run out and get yourself a positive affirmation and cinematically you're made," says one of *Oxford Opinion's* contributors about *The Grapes of Wrath*. "Fine; but don't ask me to sit through it." Well, of course, one wouldn't. But one might ask whether it is the accretion of critical opinion that has built up around *Grapes of Wrath* or the film itself that is being denigrated; whether the mistrust is of committed criticism or committed cinema.

Attitudes of this kind are, one suspects, fairly widespread. And they are understandable enough. To the generation which has grown up during the last few years, art is seen as something for kicks: films which stab at the nerves and the emotions; jazz, and the excitements surrounding it; Method acting, with its carefully sustained illusion of spontaneity. Violence on the screen is accepted as a stimulant and anything which can be labelled as slow or sentimental is suspect. Conversely, though, there does not seem to be much appreciation for the consciously cynical and sophisticated. The attitude is far from being one of disillusionment or defeat: it is more



"The critical discovery of Nicholas Ray . . ." A scene from Ray's first film, *"They Live By Night"*.

simply a disinterest in art which does not work on one's own terms, and an inevitable belief that those terms are the only valid ones.

The gap between my own Oxford generation, the initiators of *Sequence*, and the present group of Oxford critics is only twelve years or so. But those of us who grew up during the war, when violence was perhaps too close to be also a handy stimulant, and whose attitudes to the cinema were being formulated at the time of the neo-realist experiment, of the general outburst of wartime and post-war realism, are not easily inclined to divorce art and morality or art and society in our minds. At the same time, this is the generation that made the critical discovery of Nicholas Ray, helping to get his first film, *They Live By Night*, its London screening, and that admired the "black" Hollywood cinema of the post-war years. We liked (and still like) *The Big Sleep* and *Sunset Boulevard* and *Mildred Pierce*; and not for their qualities of affirmation.

These, in any case, are the skirmishing grounds of criticism; the real battlefield is elsewhere. Criticism ought to be a perpetual questioning of values, a subjection of opinions and standards to pressure. And the weakness of the *Cahiers du Cinéma* school, both in its own country and among its exponents here, seems to be that it barely admits of experience which does not take place in the cinema. Its criticism too easily becomes shop talk for the initiated; its enthusiasms are self-limiting; it turns inward upon itself, so that a film's validity is assessed not in relation to the society from which it draws its material but in relation to other cinematic experiences. It is all a bit hermetic, as though its practitioners had chosen to live in the dark, emerging to blink, mole-like, at the cruel light, to sniff the chilly air, before ducking back into the darkness of another cinema.

Looking for a Theory

"The so-called commitment argument, by forcing the antagonists to take up extreme and impossible positions, has confused the real issues. These are not whether the social or moral standpoint of the artist or aesthetic values are more

important, but whether the cinema can find its own mode of expressing essential truth."—FILM JOURNAL, Melbourne.

"What we mean by 'standards' is surely nothing that can be tabulated, but rather a general approach, a willingness to assess in detail the social and moral content of a film by analysing the impact it makes upon us. And such analysis presupposes a clear conception of the way the film medium works—i.e., an aesthetic."—DEFINITION, London.

"The impasse in film-making and in film criticism is essentially the same as the impasse in radical thought. In both, old traditions have run their course . . . In both, vague and unsystematic new stirrings have begun."—FILM QUARTERLY, San Francisco.

THESE THREE QUOTATIONS, TAKEN FROM RECENT ISSUES OF FILM JOURNALS published in three continents, all reflect the same dissatisfaction. Film criticism is in search of an aesthetic, which will not be found in the narrower issues of committed versus anti-committed attitudes; and, as *Film Journal* says, this debate ceases to be illuminating when both sides are forced into taking up extremist positions. The unattractive truth, of course, is that there is plenty of reviewing and not nearly enough criticism (and a magazine such as this one must accept its share of the guilt); that the film, because it cannot be taken home and studied like a novel or a play, invites reactions and impressions rather than sustained analysis; that there has never really been an aesthetic of the sound cinema, and that most of the standard text books are useful only for those who still believe that cinema history virtually stops with *Blackmail* and *The Blue Angel*.

The contemporary cinema is moving, and moving fairly rapidly, in half a dozen directions at once: a state of affairs which increases the bewilderment of the critic who would like to hang on to an aesthetic like a life-belt in a stormy sea. An aesthetic that can encompass Resnais' constantly moving camera and Ozu's stationary one; the anti-dramatic cinema of Zavattini and the anti-dramatic cinema of Bresson; the intellectual refinements of a film by Antonioni and the sensuous impact of one by Renoir; the stripped down cinema of Buñuel and the dressed up cinema of Bergman . . . this is a tall order. I do not believe, in any case, that the elusive, will o' the wisp "aesthetic of cinema" is suddenly going to emerge; and I can't believe that it greatly matters.

In the long run, the critic is still on his own, confronted with the work of art. His tools: his sensibility, his knowledge, his judgment, and his apparatus of values. There are fifty different ways of being a good critic, and again I do not believe it really matters—as the editors of *Definition* apparently do—that two critics "who might be expected to share certain basic values" can arrive at judgments almost diametrically opposed. "What are the differences in attitude, in presuppositions, in general view of life which can elicit conflicting responses to a single film?" enquires *Definition*. One might almost as profitably ask why two witnesses disagree about what really happened in a traffic accident.

Any theory one can formulate is of general value only in so far as it illuminates the general problem. And the main duty of criticism at present, as I see it, has little to do with the argument about form versus content, aesthetic values versus values of subject. If the film makes an impact, it does so through its style, using style here to mean the full force of the artist's personality as revealed in his work: there can be no argument here. Primarily, though, I would suggest that the critical duty is to examine the cinema in terms of its ideas, to submit these to the test of comment and discussion. That the cinema is an art is no longer in question; that battle is over and won. But if it is an art on the same plane as literature and the theatre, then it is the use of its special techniques for the expression of ideas that must make it so.

One is not asking here for an intellectual cinema, though some corrective to the present mistrust of intellect and over-emphasis on emotional content might not be a bad thing. And the content of a film in terms of ideas, naturally, is as much

a matter of its attitude as its subject, since if there is no attitude there can be no idea worth speaking of. Beyond this, and beyond art, assumptions and ideas about the entertainment film are constantly changing; and the critic has here a responsibility to keep the entertainment cinema clearly in focus, to put assumptions to the challenge of analysis.

If these are the critic's jobs, what of his principles? Commitment, clearly, is inescapable, but commitment precisely to what? I find much contemporary "committed" writing needlessly didactic, too readily prepared to lay down the law and to accept, unconsidered, such Brechtian dicta as the one that the only questions which can usefully be asked are those which can be answered.

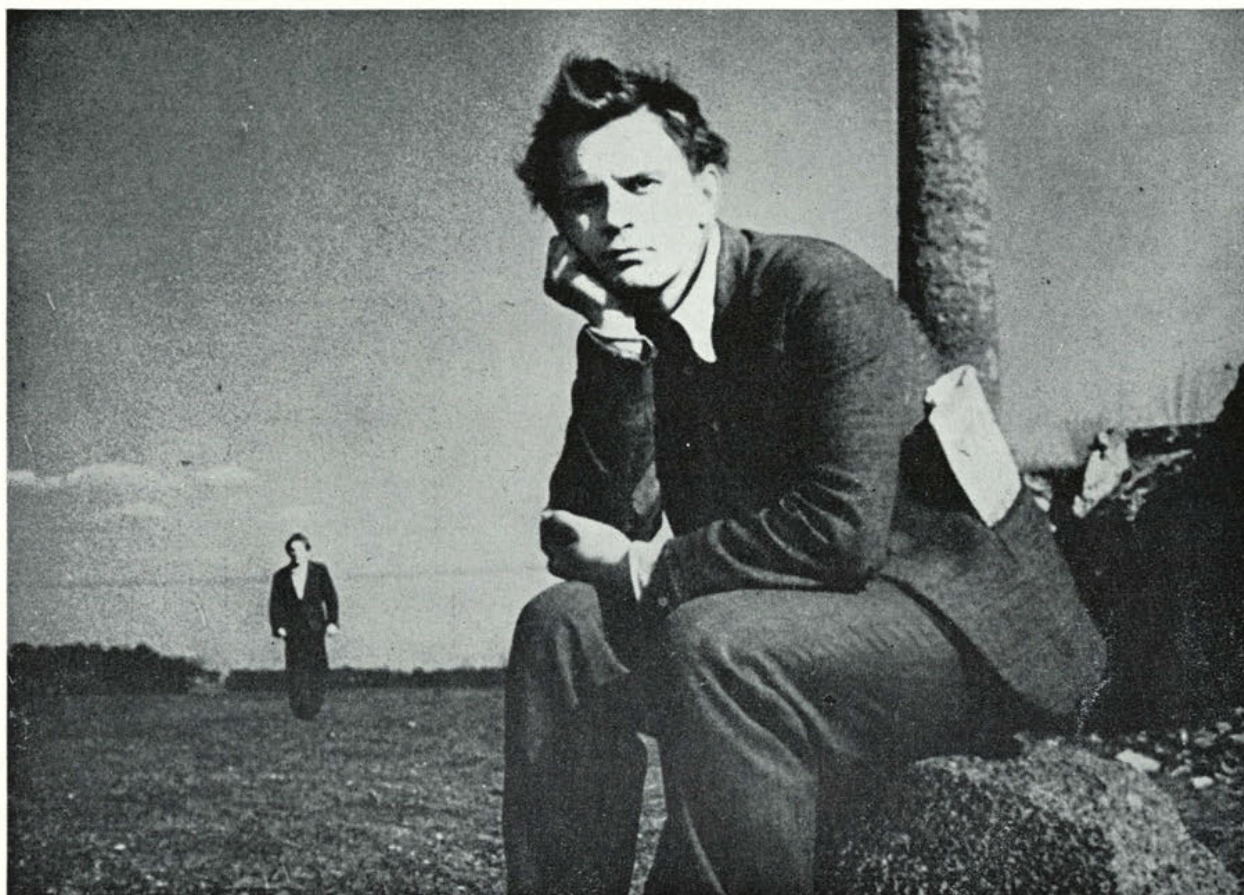
Art has an inescapable relationship to politics, but the committed critic, in practice, tries too often to narrow it down: art must be related to *his* politics, and the relationship must be recognisable. There is a suspicion of the complexities of the artistic process and a preference for the subject which lays its cards on the table. Lionel Trilling, in his book *The Liberal Imagination*, writes of "the dark and bloody crossroads where literature and politics meet. One does not go there gladly," he adds, "but nowadays it is not exactly a matter of free choice whether one does or does not go." And he proceeds to an analysis of American critical attitudes to Henry James and Theodore Dreiser, of the "fear of the intellect" which inhibited American critical responses to the complexities of James and the indulgence extended to Dreiser because "his books have the awkwardness, the chaos, the heaviness which we associate with 'reality' ". Over-simplification of the kind Trilling attacks is the ambush awaiting the critic who does not question his own commitments as severely as he does those of other people.

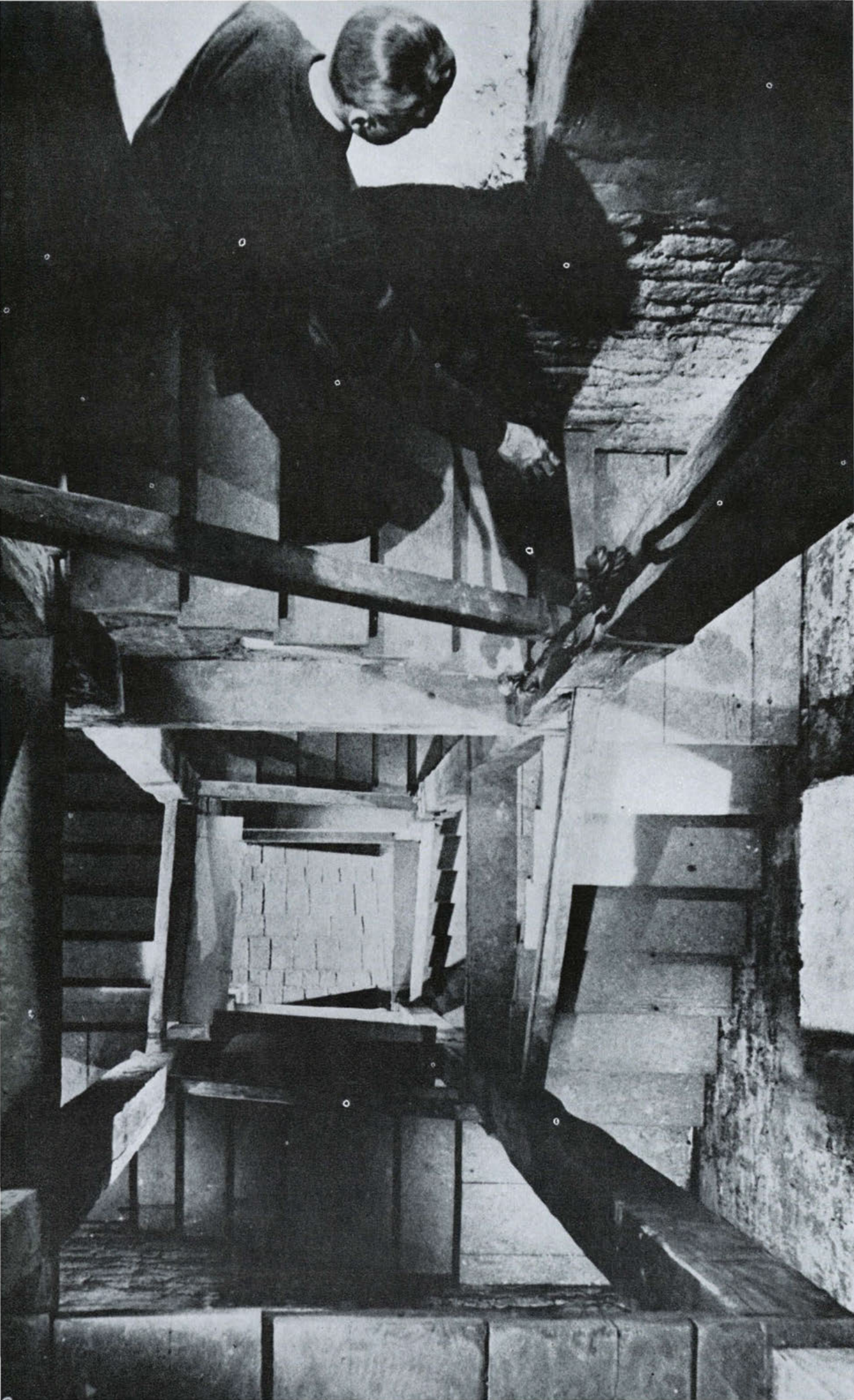
If cinema is the art we think it is, then it is entitled to the kind of critical analysis that has traditionally been devoted to the theatre and the novel: and the principles which seem most

likely to be constructively useful remain the liberal ones. The socialist may argue that liberalism is not so much a commitment as a refuge from commitment; which is to say that the liberal label has been the excuse for any amount of escape from thought. On the level at which ideas are formulated, however, both about society and about art, I believe there is at present rather more conflict and disagreement about means than about ends; and liberalism, which ought to mean allegiance to principles but a certain flexibility of mind about assumptions, a readiness to subject them to the pressure of thought, is more valuable here than the rigidity of mind which believes that once the end is agreed on the means must be pre-determined. Again, one might profitably turn to Trilling: "The job of criticism would seem to be to recall liberalism to its first essential awareness of variousness and possibility, which implies the awareness of complexity and difficulty." The awareness of complexity; or the readiness, perhaps, to investigate the questions an artist chooses to ask rather than to expect him to answer those we would put to him.

In terms of our own medium: *Hiroshima mon Amour*, *L'Avventura*, *Nazarin* are concerned with questions; *Les Quatre Cents Coups*, or *The World of Apu*, have more to do with the answers. The recurring question: the difficulty of loving and the problem of communication. It would be entirely profitless to discuss which of these films is the "best"; and hardly more useful to discuss whose approach is the most valid. But a tradition of criticism—and I believe it would necessarily be a liberal one—which looked to the cinema to extend our range of ideas rather than to confirm pre-conceived assumptions, could find some of its material here. We might not be able to pull down a film aesthetic out of the clouds, but we should be able to get closer to defining the cinema's place in the world we live in. And, while we are about it, we might try to rescue the word "liberal" from its present implications of indecision and inertia.

A committed cinema and a questioning one: the final sequence of Wajda's "A Generation."





*Richard
Roud /
The
French
Line*

THE FRENCH LINE

EVERY YEAR THE French monthly *Cahiers du Cinéma* asks thirty critics to choose what each of them thinks to be the ten best films of the year. Allowing for the differences in release dates, the lists are often fairly close to those of English critics on a corresponding level. Last year, for example, one found high on many French critics' lists *Ivan the Terrible*, *Hiroshima mon Amour*, *Les Quatre Cents Coups* and *Wild Strawberries*. But half of the French critics also included Howard Hawks' *Rio Bravo*. It would be fair to say that *Rio Bravo* passed more or less unnoticed in England: some critics thought it was efficient, some boring, some too long, some pleasant. Only William Whitebait seems to have realised that it was not just another Western. SIGHT AND SOUND didn't review it, although it was mentioned favourably, if briefly, in an article by John Gillett. But hardly anyone here would have included it in his 10-best list, let alone placing it second after *Ivan* (Jean Domarchi), or third after *Ugetsu Monogatari* and *Ivan* (Roger Leenhardt) or fourth (Eric Rohmer) or even seventh (Claude Chabrol).

Rio Bravo was not, however, the only surprise in the French lists. I wonder how many English critics would have included Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, Samuel Fuller's *Run of the Arrow*, Douglas Sirk's *A Time to Love and a Time to Die*, or Nicholas Ray's *Wind Across the Everglades*. One's first reaction might be to conclude that these men must be very foolish. And indeed, until a year or two ago, one might have got away with it. But today it would be difficult, I think, to maintain that film-makers like Alain Resnais, François Truffaut, Claude Chabrol, Jean-Luc Godard, Pierre Kast and Jean-Pierre Melville are fools.

Furthermore, the fact that their lists also contain films of which we think highly (*Ivan the Terrible*, *Ugetsu Monogatari*, etc.) gives pause. On closer consideration one can see that it is really only as to American films that their standards differ. Not only do they not like some of the American films admired by English critics (*A Man is Ten Feet Tall*, *A Hole in the Head*), but they revere American film directors who are either practically unknown over here or else not very highly considered—film-makers such as Paul Wendkos, Edgar Ulmer or Gerd Oswald.

* * *

Looney, Lang, Preminger and Cottafravi [an Italian] are the greatest of the great.—MICHEL MOURLET

Fuller is to Welles as Marlowe is to Shakespeare.—LUC MOULLET

Hitchcock is one of the greatest inventors of forms in the history of the cinema. Only Murnau and Eisenstein can perhaps stand comparison with him on this ground.—ERIC ROHMER, CLAUDE CHABROL

To remain insensitive to the thousand beauties of Nicholas Ray's *Party Girl* is to turn one's back resolutely on the modern cinema, to reject the cinema as an autonomous art.—FEREYDOUN HOVEYDA

Hawks' oeuvre is an epic of intelligence; his adventure films are a homage to man's knowledge and will.—JACQUES RIVETTE

In case the point is not yet clear, let me add that when the Prix de la Nouvelle Critique was awarded for the first time last spring, the prize for the best foreign film of the year went to Fritz Lang's *Moonfleet*. The second prize was given to *Pather Panchali* (which, let us note, had been

characterised by François Truffaut—after seeing only the first three reels—as Europeanised and insipid).

If, however, one admits that by and large the tastes of the *Cahiers* team of critics coincide with ours (as "Anglo-Saxons", to use one of their favourite words); and if one admits, as one must, that some of them have made remarkable and even great films, then rather than throwing up one's hands in the air or dismissing them all as mad, one should try to see why and how their judgments of American films differ so substantially from ours.

A Certain Arrangement of Lines and Colours

FIRST OF ALL, the French critics are practically indifferent to the content of a film—or at least they claim to be. Claude Chabrol has stated categorically that the important or "big" subject is worth no more than the unimportant one. He even goes on to say that the smaller the subject is, the more it can be treated greatly. In other words, whereas in England a film with a good (i.e. noble, humanistic, socially aware, humanitarian) subject has already won half the battle, in France the more noble a film's subject the more suspiciously it is regarded. The greatest link between all the schools of French film criticism is an insistence on the supremacy of form over content.

This is only to be expected in a country where, I think it safe to say, form has always been considered of prime importance in the arts. Many French literary critics prefer Racine to Shakespeare solely on the grounds of form. Furthermore, whereas in England the supreme art has always been literature, in France it has, at least in the last century, been as much painting. And there is no denying (*pace* John Berger) that in painting, form is, as far as the two can be separated, paramount over content. The great war-cry of the late nineteenth century in France was Maurice Denis' statement that before being a battle scene or a nude, or whatever, a painting is above all a certain arrangement of lines and colours. As painting in France has become more and more abstract, this argument has gained general acceptance. In France the cinema has never needed, as it were, to work its passage towards respectability. Almost from the outset, French critics felt bound to discuss films on as serious a level as that on which the other arts are discussed; and this means, inevitably, on the formal level.

But is their postulate as to the primacy of form really valid, even for them? Is it not clear that they also like the American film for its subject matter, for its themes, most of all, perhaps, for its portrayal of the American "world"? It may be difficult for English people to think of Detroit as El Dorado, but it is undeniable that American life in all its forms exercises a very strong hold over present-day young French intellectuals.

Ever since Descartes, French culture has been one of restraint, rationalism and moderation. Since the weight of inherited culture lies more heavily in France than in almost any other country, the reaction against it is bound to be equally strong. For our present purposes, the first important reaction came at the end of the last century with men like Jarry and Lautréamont, precursors of Dada and surrealism, who revolted against the cult of rationalism and good taste and even against "art". This reaction built up in the early 1900's; and, significantly, it was then that the cult of America really began. One of the first to

Opposite page: "Vertigo". "The art of Hitchcock is to make us participate in the vertigo felt by the characters . . . and beyond this vertigo to show us the profundity of a moral idea."



"The hard and spare world of Faulkner": Dorothy Malone and Rock Hudson in a scene from "Tarnished Angels".

comment on it was Jean Cocteau, who declared that he found it just as silly as the *fin de siècle* cult for Venice. But certain tides cannot be stemmed. Soon the ships of the French Line began to bring over the first jazz and ragtime records. Stravinsky played them to Picasso: from that moment, they were in. The next American export to conquer France came from Hollywood: Chaplin, DeMille (*The Cheat*), Rio Jim (alias William S. Hart), Griffith and Stroheim. It took the American cinema, after all, to convince men like Renoir that the movies had any possibilities as an art form.

Finally, France began to adopt modern American literature: Hemingway, Dos Passos and Faulkner. Indeed, Faulkner was appreciated earlier in France than in England and America. While *Sanctuary* was considered here to be a pot-boiler, in France it was hailed by Malraux as "the incursion of Greek tragedy into the detective story".

America and the Existentialists

WHAT WAS IT THAT the pre-war generation liked about these authors? Form, yes, in the case of Faulkner. But Gide, although he reluctantly admitted that Dashiell Hammett was not in the same class as Hemingway or Faulkner, said that he regarded Hammett's *Red Harvest* as a remarkable achievement, the last word in atrocity, cynicism and horror.

This appreciation of American literature was intensified (and almost codified) after the war by the Existentialists. The American novel, reported an astounded American critic, was esteemed in France because, as the product of the most advanced industrial nation, it afforded particularly powerful images of the brutal *milieux* and the lonely heroes, the alienation and dehumanisation which are typical of the modern world in general. Hemingway and Faulkner were specially appreciated not for their grasp of ideas or the subtleties of their psychology but because of their power over physical fact, their translation of the brute, irrational, "given" quality of the world, the concrete feel of things. Comparing Proust with Faulkner, Sartre commented that "Proust is a classic, and a Frenchman: the French may lose themselves over the weekend but they always end up by finding themselves again." The

taste for clear ideas, eloquence and intellectualism constrained Proust to preserve at least a semblance of chronology and logical coherence. This was why Sartre preferred Faulkner to Proust rather than, as one might have imagined, the other way round.

After the war the discovery of the new Italian and American cinemas provoked a renewal—even, as Roger Leenhardt puts it, an inflation—of cinematographic thought in France. The number of articles and books on the cinema was suddenly multiplied by a score. And the younger critics were not only ardent but erudite. They all possessed—or pretended to possess—great literary and artistic culture. (It is not for nothing, incidentally, that France publishes more *Morceaux Choisis*, or Great Pages from Great Authors, than any other country.) Hence, when they first began to see American films, they already had in their minds an image of America which had been created by Faulkner, Hemingway, etc. This, of course, is quite different from the case of the average English critic, whose image of America is tinged by tolerant condescension.

Take, for instance, the case of *Tarnished Angels*. Directed by Douglas Sirk, the film is an adaptation of Faulkner's novel *Pylon*; and *Cahiers* found it to be the most faithful film adaptation of any Faulkner novel. The characters and situations of the novel were changed considerably; certain themes which were dear to Faulkner and his generation were disregarded. Nevertheless, said Luc Moullet, because the greatness of Faulkner is to be found in the gratuitousness of *Pylon*, therefore the gratuitousness of Sirk's constant short, lateral, almost invisible tracking shots is a faithful translation of the form of *Pylon*. *Mise-en-scène* (of which more later) corresponds to novelistic subtlety. Art is only a question of artifice, says Moullet. "Therefore let us praise an artifice which is cultivated without regrets, which thus acquires a higher degree of sincerity . . . The true is as false as the false; only the *archi-false* becomes true." (!)

Although the above quotation is just another example of Moullet's love for the rather worn-out paradox (*A Bout de Souffle* is profound because it is superficial), the fact remains that as a translation of the hard and spare world of Faulkner, as well as a rendering of life in a provincial city of the Thirties, *Tarnished Angels* is a remarkable formal effort; and this was generally recognised in France. Here it was relegated to the Film Guide page of SIGHT AND SOUND; and, as it was not judged to be of special interest to SIGHT AND SOUND readers, it was given no star. In the same issue, however, *Celui qui doit Mourir* was awarded two stars because it was considered to be a "brave attempt at a grand scale tackling of enormous subjects", though it was finally discounted by SIGHT AND SOUND because of the "unbridled gap between form and content". This brings out the greatest difference between *Cahiers du Cinéma* and this magazine: if driven to it, *Cahiers* will choose form (*Tarnished Angels*) and SIGHT AND SOUND content (*Celui qui doit Mourir*). For the French, intentions do not count: there is no such thing in art as a minor genre.

This is not just a question of "commitment". In France, René Guyonnet, a Left Wing "committed" critic, has put the problem very clearly:

Many people begin to smile when one rhapsodises on the beauty of *Rio Bravo* or *Kiss Me Deadly*. This is because their conditioning by literature and literary values leads them to see in Aldrich's film only an illustration of a novel by Mickey Spillane, a writer for whom they feel only a probably justified contempt. Or, in the case of *Rio Bravo*, they feel that a Western can only be a succession of chases and bang-bang-bang—that is, a breath of fresh air and a fountain of youth. *Eh bien, non!* . . . There is, beyond the appearance of stupidity, a meaning to be understood (a meaning which does not necessarily raise the question of the fate of humanity, but one which is nevertheless worthy of consideration). It is the critic's job to extract this meaning . . .

It is easier, I know, to appreciate films like *Stars* or *Come Back, Africa* whose classic humanism and generosity of themes is obvious—even though, perhaps, the cinematographic language is not on as high a level as the themes. Even a film like *Pather Panchali*, which demands a sensitivity to the poetry of images and of music, should not present many difficulties, for nothing interposes itself between its poetry and the spectator. But Westerns and films noirs are perhaps the best test of the film critic because their value is so often a matter of form, technique, iconography: all the elements which separate the cinema from literature.

To return to the *Cahiers* group, the only trouble about their appreciation of *Kiss Me Deadly* was that it led them to elect Robert Aldrich then and there to their pantheon of the truly great: Hawks, Ray, Anthony Mann, Preminger, etc. And once a director is accepted by *Cahiers*, it automatically follows that all his subsequent (and even previous) works are *ipso facto* magnificent. *The Big Knife*, *Attack*, *Autumn Leaves*, *Ten Seconds to Hell*: all were duly praised by *Cahiers* according to that system of criticism which derives, I believe, from Chateaubriand (who was also, curiously if irrelevantly, the first French writer to introduce the cult of America): the *critique des beautés*. That is to say, the critic concentrates entirely on the beauties of a work of art rather than attempting impartially to point out both the good and the bad elements.

La Politique des Auteurs

IT TAKES A LONG time and many disappointing films before the *Cahiers* team will change their mind about a film-maker who has once been admitted to their pantheon. Ever since their 31st issue, the *politique des auteurs* (whereby you choose those you are for and those you are against) has perhaps been the basic guiding principle of the magazine. But *Cahiers* now seems ready to desert Aldrich. The first disappointment came when they realised that Aldrich didn't really like *Kiss Me Deadly* himself. And I think it is now generally realised that the very special quality of the film derives partly from the peculiar tension set up between Aldrich's hatred of his subject and his determination to use this story to get across his own views about democracy, the police and fascism. ("Art is born of constraint and dies of freedom," said André Gide.) In any case, Truffaut sold the pass a few months ago in New York when he declared to an interviewer that he thought Aldrich's later films were rather disappointing. This may not seem like much to us, but it is the first crack in the critical armour of the magazine.

The best example of the degree to which the *politique des auteurs* can be carried is the Hitchcock case. Chabrol and



"Films noirs are perhaps the best test of the film critic..." Ralph Meeker in Aldrich's *"Kiss Me Deadly"*.

Rohmer decided long ago that Hitchcock was more than a "master of suspense". He was a great moralist, and a Catholic moralist to boot. There is a rather pitiful interview on record in which Truffaut and Chabrol asked Hitchcock why he had told an English interviewer that he preferred his English films to the later, "more significant" American ones, when he had told them the year before that he really preferred the American pictures. Hitchcock answered that he *really* preferred the later films but had just told the English critic the opposite to be nice. Whereupon Rivette, Chabrol, Truffaut, etc. breathed a sigh of relief; rather incautiously, it seems to me, since it never apparently occurred to them that Hitchcock was perhaps only being "nice" to them as well.

Here is an extract from the book Rohmer and Chabrol devoted to Hitchcock:

The art of Hitchcock is to make us participate in the vertigo felt by the characters—and this by the fascination exerted on one by any abstracted quasi-geometrical figure—and beyond this vertigo to show us the profundity of a moral idea. The current which passes from the symbol to the idea always passes through the condenser of the emotions... Thus the emotion is a means, not an end... it is beyond form and this side of idea. That is why it always leaves us with a bitter taste in the mouth, and the feeling of a Unity which is the very Unity of the world. A Unity ever discernible in the middle of chaos, an original light which reflects on the sombre facets of Evil some of its most beautiful rays.

If this were not enough, *Cahiers* once devoted fourteen pages to a thematic index of objects in Hitchcock's films: glasses, throats, clocks, cats, dogs, eyes, knives, keys...

The disquieting thing about this Hitchcock idolatry is that it seems to have incited Claude Chabrol to make his worst film, *A Double Tour*, which is an adaptation of an American thriller, re-set in France and treated more or less *à la* Hitchcock. But Chabrol is so far alone in extending his admiration to imitation. Alain Resnais loves *Rio Bravo*, but he made *Hiroshima mon Amour*, of which the least that could be said is that the content is equal in importance to the form. Truffaut

"The subject of the film was of little concern..." Gangster meeting in Nicholas Ray's *"Party Girl"*.





"Party Girl": *Mise-en-scène*.

praised *Kiss Me Deadly*, but *Les Quatre Cents Coups* is about as "humanist" a film as one could imagine. (Whether Truffaut's *Tirez sur le Pianiste* will be something different will be interesting to discover.)

Mise-en-Scène

IN OTHER WORDS, at least among the older of the *Cahiers* critics, the films they make themselves correspond more to what we in England like to think of as great cinema: a fusion of significant form with literary or humanistic content. But among some of the newer (as yet, non-film-making) members of the *Cahiers* team, Hollywood is regarded as the cinema: "less intimidated than the Europeans by a whole literary and artistic culture, the truth of *mise-en-scène* has there attained its furthest development."

It might be a good idea to attempt to define that untranslatable term *mise-en-scène*. Literally, it is defined as staging, or stage-producing. Alexandre Astruc originally defined the *Cahiers* use of the term as "a certain way of extending the *élans* of the soul in the movements of the body: a song, a rhythm, a dance." Critics like Hoveyda and Mourlet take it even further. Film is not the script, the acting, or even the montage: the whole quality of it is this mysterious, elusive *mise-en-scène*.

The curtains open. The house goes dark. A rectangle of light presently vibrates before our eyes. Soon it is invaded by gestures and sounds. Here we are absorbed by that space and that unreal time. More or less absorbed. The mysterious energy which "supports" with varying degrees of success the backwash of shadow and light and their foam of sounds is called *mise-en-scène*. It is on it that our attention is fixed, it is it which organises a universe, which covers the screen—it, and nothing else. Like the shimmer of the notes of a piano piece, like the flow of words of a poem, like the harmonies and discords of the colours of a painting . . . The placing of

the actors and the objects, their movements within the frame, should express everything.

This to them is cinema, and they reject all films which do not aim at this level of sublimity, films which limit themselves to sordid "problems" (neo-realism, I suppose) or to telling stories "with images" (95 per cent. of all films, according to their calculations).

There is nothing wrong with this purist theory. A critic should try to separate the literary qualities of a scenario or the intellectual qualities of a story from the purely formal qualities of a film—the way in which "the actors and the objects, and their movement within the frame" express the personality, the genius of a director. The trouble, it seems to me, is in their application of this theory. For to these critics, the great film of 1960 (at least up to the time of this writing) was Nicholas Ray's *Party Girl*. (I suspect that before the year is out it will have been supplanted by *The Savage Innocents*.)

In an eleven-page essay, Fereydown Hoveyda discusses *Party Girl*. Discusses, however, is not perhaps quite the right word, for after a few lines in which he admits that the film was shot from a script imposed on Ray, that it was a "commissioned work", he proceeds to a perfect example of the *critique des beautés*. Well, let us see what some of these "beauties" are.

First of all, Hoveyda says, "The subject of *Party Girl* is idiotic. So what?"

If the complications of the stories which unroll on the screens constituted the substratum of the cinematographic *oeuvre*, we would have only to annex the seventh art to literature and abandon the columns of *Cahiers* to literary criticism.

To be sure, certain old fogies are always insisting that the critic should take into account the influence of production systems, the importance of the script and of acting. One might just as well take into consideration the influence of the planets and the stars, retorts Hoveyda. No: the essence of the cinema is in nothing but the *mise-en-scène*.

The first "great" thing about *Party Girl* is the fact that Ray has inserted an enlargement of a Fitzpatrick 16 mm. colour shot of Venice into the sequence concerning Farrell and Vicky's "honeymoon" in Europe. Better still, the back transparencies used in the scenes in automobiles are anachronistic, and the transparencies in the scenes at Antibes are ugly and clumsy. Why is this great, you may ask? Because, says Hoveyda, it shows *irrefutably* that Ray is interested only in interiors and in the internal problems of his characters. This can be proved to the sceptical by the first shots of the film: first, a low-angle shot of a painted flat representing skyscrapers; then the camera moves down and pans to the left on to the neon night club sign; and then, in a long tracking shot, it advances towards the *inside* of the building . . .

And so forth. Three pages later, Hoveyda returns to the charge by Louis Marcorelles that Ray's talent has been wasted in this film on an idiotic subject:

If I have said that the subject of the film was of little concern to me, it was because I think that the *mise-en-scène* is capable of transfiguring it. If anyone persists in thinking *Party Girl* an imbecility, I will cry out: Long live the imbecility which dazzles my eyes, fascinates my heart, and gives me a glimpse of the kingdom of heaven!

But perhaps we need not go on to follow Hoveyda's rhapsodies throughout the remaining three pages of his article. Every remarkable shot is mentioned. (Though not, curiously enough, the one I consider the most beautiful, which occurs when Vicky, suspecting that her friend has committed suicide, rushes into the bathroom. The camera frames the wall at eye level and then slowly descends to the girl, whom we see bent over the tub, her hair and arms streaming down into the blood-filled bath.) To Hoveyda, as to many French critics, a number of beautiful shots equals a great film. As René Clair put it thirty-four years ago: the only thing that counts

in the cinema is the value of the image in itself, and not the story which is merely a pretext.

But the problem remains. Unlike a painting, a film exists in time, and there must be something to link all those shots together. "Yes, oh dear, yes. The novel tells a story," said E. M. Forster. And the cinema, too, must tell a story. It would seem, however, that Hoveyda and his clique *prefer* the unimportant, second-rate, meaningless story: it's generally the mediocre directors, says Hoveyda, who have recourse to the big themes to try to hide their own inadequacy. His answer to those who accuse him of defending minor B-pictures is simply to retort: "What's wrong with adventure and gangster stories," somewhat like that great hero of Krafft-Ebbing who similarly retorted: "What's wrong with a goose?" One would find it difficult to answer because the question has been incorrectly put. There is, in effect, nothing *wrong* with a B-picture story. And, to be sure, the great director *can* transform it into a work of art. But the most satisfying work of art is surely the one in which the content, or the story, doesn't have to be transcended.

Unfortunately, when a critic has to quote Hegel and Kant in reviewing a film by Minnelli, it is not because, as Hoveyda maintains, the cinema is at least as important as literature, painting and the drama. It is because somehow the critic feels he must dignify his liking of the film by the most impeccable intellectual references. It is a curious paradox that those French critics who delight in non-intellectual, irrational films always feel called upon to discuss them in the most pedantic and academic way possible. The trouble, one feels, is that they like the second-rate but daren't admit it, so the second-rate must be built up by dint of references to Kant, Hegel, *et al.*

Charlton Heston is an Axiom

HAPPILY, THERE ARE SIGNS that a reaction in favour of common sense and intellectual values is on its way. Even Hoveyda, in a recent issue of *Cahiers*, attacks the MacMahonist aesthetic (so-called because the MacMahon cinema usually features films by Lang, Losey, etc.) in the person of its leader, Michel Mourlet. Mourlet's gods, it will be recalled, are Lang, Losey, Preminger, Raoul Walsh, Cottafavi and Don Weis, and his ideal is the cinema of violence:

Charlton Heston is an axiom. By himself alone he constitutes a tragedy, and his presence in any film whatsoever suffices to create beauty. The contained violence expressed by the sombre phosphorescence of his eyes, his eagle's profile, the haughty arch of his eyebrows, his prominent cheek-bones, the bitter and hard curve of his mouth, the fabulous power of his torso: this is what he possesses and what not even the worst director can degrade. It is in this sense that one can say that Charlton Heston, by his existence alone, gives a more accurate definition of the cinema than films like *Hiroshima mon Amour* or *Citizen Kane*, whose aesthetic either ignores or impugns Charlton Heston.

Obviously one can go no further in the erection of a system based on one's own tastes, and one is glad to see such



"Charlton Heston is an axiom..." With Eleanor Parker in "The Naked Jungle".

an extremist view condemned by the greater part of the *Cahiers* team. Of course, their main weakness is that it was only a question of time before their system of rationalising personal quirks and fancies should produce such a crypto-fascist and slightly nutty approach to the cinema.

On the other hand, however, over the years they have maintained the basic principle enunciated by André Bazin: the cinema is not an illustration of a scenario, it is not literature with pictures added. In spite of their divergence of views (Marcorelles, for example, is as far from Mourlet as Mourlet is from, say, Doniol-Valcroze) the one thing they all have in common, I think, and that we would gain most by adopting, is the firm belief that form is at least *as* important as content. Degas once said to Mallarmé that although he had lots of ideas he was finding it very difficult to write a poem. Whereupon Mallarmé replied: "But Degas, poems aren't made with ideas; they're made with words."

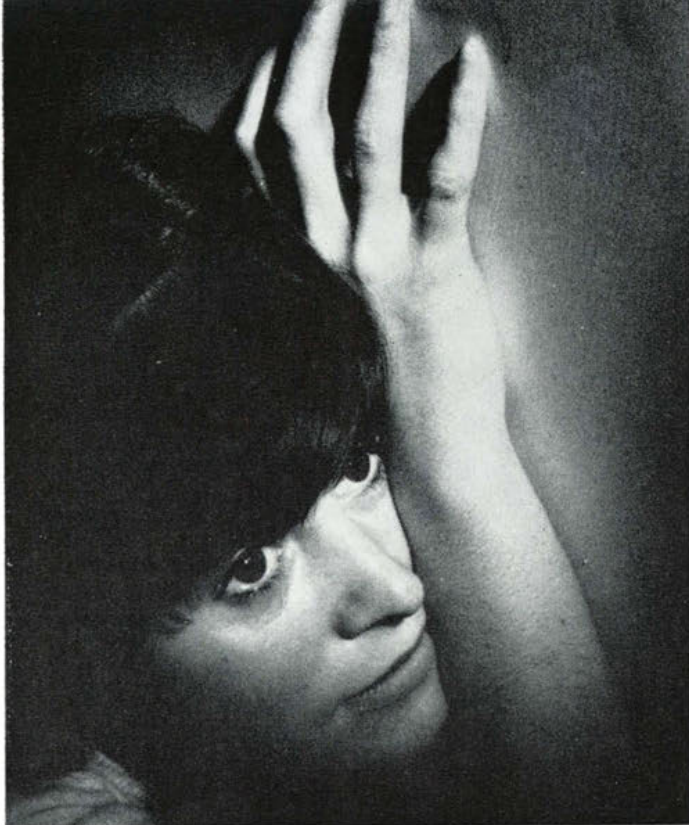
THE SEVENTH ART

THE TWIN GUNS of Navarone, the two giant "big Berthas" that provide the title for . . . *The Guns of Navarone*, have been completed and erected at Shepperton studios. Each gun weighs more than fifteen tons and is sixty-six feet long. They are the largest movie guns ever built and the costliest "props" ever provided for a motion picture. Although no official figures have been released, it is admitted that the cost of building and setting up these super-size weapons was more than the total budget of some corner-cutting movies. (Publicity bulletin.)

"Let's make it more realistic," ordered the Egyptian movie director during rehearsal of a scene calling for the hero to slap the heroine, Nagwa Fouad, with a blow that broke her million-dollar

nose and left her lying unconscious on the set. When the producer and director realised what had happened to their high-salaried female star, who is also one of Egypt's leading belly-dancers, they turned in fury on the film hero and fractured Ramses' skull with a pair of studio chairs. Shooting has been suspended pending recovery of the two top stars. (Report on the film *Sweet and Tender* in the *Jerusalem Post*.)

Four Roger Corman Filmgroup productions will be released in Russia: *Wasp Woman*, *The Beast from Haunted Cave*, *Ski Troop Attack* and *The Battle of Blood Island*. The science fiction and action thematics were picked by the Soviet Ministry of Culture. (*Far East Film News*, April 1960.)



Photograph: Bob Butler.

"Death of a Girl".

A New Name

NOW THAT THE initial excitement generated by the first group of *nouvelle vague* films has died down, some French critics have hinted that the movement seems in danger of petering out. Having recently attended a private screening of the first film of yet another new director, I take a more optimistic view, for *Death of a Girl* is not only a striking cinematic achievement, but one which opens up all sorts of new paths for the modern film artist. Its author, Pierre Puerilescu, is a 24 year old ex-student of l'IDHEC, whose wealthy Rumanian parents helped and encouraged him to set up this production, all of which was shot on location in a Provençal village. The film, which lasts about an hour, is a kind of Jeanne d'Arc allegory, told in terms of a modern morality tale. Maria, its heroine, is a pretty village girl who suddenly becomes aware of a strange power within herself to help or hurt people. At certain moments, her feelings of extreme tenderness lead her to a state of ecstasy and all goes well with the village; at other times, she hears strange voices which turn her into a sly, sensual tormentor and her continual taunting of a handsome farmer leads to the tragic climax when he kills her with a scythe in an open field.

Thus, all the way through, Puerilescu makes a comment on the relative strength of good and evil and the power of love to succour and destroy at the same time. Almost the first thing one notices in the film is the director's ability to extract a sublime kind of beauty from the most terrible images, as in the scene where Maria hears her evil voices for the first time. Crouched in a corner of her room, her distorted face is seemingly caressed by the camera (in huge close-ups) as the sound track's electronic murmurings rise to a shrill climax to be superseded by the high-pitched wail of the *ondes Martenot* to symbolise the moment of possession. The volume of sound at this moment is almost unbearable, yet after a minute or so one's ears become accustomed to what is, in fact, a most audacious aural effect.

Puerilescu's handling of the camera displays equal mastery, especially in the final funeral scene. As the girl's bloody corpse

is carried from the field, the villagers gather round and form a cortège. All these movements are marvellously caught in a series of brief, rhythmically cut tracking shots alternating with high angle shots of the procession moving under the camera. This sense of complete spatial and emotional unity is enhanced by repeatedly cutting back to the girl's bleeding mouth—this shot seems to grow more beautiful with each repetition, as if the whole universe were crying out for pity. But Puerilescu reserves his master stroke until the very end. The camera hovers uncertainly over the crowd and then, as the *ondes Martenot* swells up on the track, it sweeps down on to the shattered face for the last time. Looking back in tranquillity, one realises that this is probably the first truly poetic zoom lens shot in the history of the cinema.

M. Puerilescu, a pale, rather highly-strung young man, is not an easy person to know, but after the screening he talked about his aims and theories at some length. He stated, at the outset, that his favourite directors were Nicholas Ray, Lang, Hitchcock and Hugo Haas (he has seen Haas's *Lizzie* eleven times). Technically, he feels most inspired by Ray and is particularly enthusiastic about his feeling for movement and framing. He wanted to shoot *Death of a Girl* in black-and-white Dyaliscope, but this proved impossible at the last moment. When I mentioned that some of the framing nevertheless reminded me of Ray's CinemaScope films, Puerilescu replied that he had viewed a number of Ray's non-Scope films as if they were designed for a wide screen. This has led to some very exciting and strange groupings in Puerilescu's own film: some of the most important action takes place on the extreme edges of the frame. He is also fond of close-ups in which the head of the figure nearest the camera partially obscures the head of a second person. "I feel that it is important to eliminate all inessential details," he said. "I am striving for a synthesis of spiritual and spatial meaning as in Hitchcock's *I Confess* and *The Wrong Man*. It is not necessary to reveal the whole face, as in Bresson—instead, I favour a dynamic mixture of sharp camera movement and swift cutting to convey the physical 'presence' of an actor. You must try to keep the screen alive all the time."

This final statement, I think, is the key to the film's unique power. Puerilescu leaves nothing to chance—one can almost see the director at work in each sequence, shaping and controlling his material with a sharp, rhythmic precision. There is no dawdling over landscape or striving after "poetic" effects as in Satyajit Ray's trilogy; here, editing is used creatively to sustain the film's swiftly changing moods and there are at least three startling shock cuts. "I did not set out to make either a horror film or a pastoral tragedy; I have tried to make an ambiguously humane film," Puerilescu concluded. "For me, the mood and meaning of a story must grow out of the style. Halfway through the shooting, I found I could do things with the camera which I had not anticipated, so the style becomes a little more complex later on. Some people have said that they do not know what my heroine is supposed to represent. I don't really care about this aspect. I just used her to tell a story about the difficulties of love." (Incidentally, the actress, a newcomer called Claudine Laforge, gives an extraordinary performance, aided by Puerilescu's formalised direction with its obsessive close-ups of eyes, mouth and hair.)

Before leaving, he told me that his next project will be an adaptation of a short story by an emigré Rumanian writer living in Paris about the semi-incestuous relationship of a brother and sister living together in an old château. The sound-track will consist solely of *musique concrète*. Puerilescu's future development will be watched with eager anticipation, for here is a film-maker with a truly disturbing talent.

JEAN TELLIG

M. Tellig has recently been engaged in studying the work of the younger European directors (notably the French school) in connection with his forthcoming book, *A la recherche d'un langage cinématographique contemporain*.

STUDS LONIGAN

AND

ELMER GANTRY

ALBERT
JOHNSON



THE PROBLEM OF ADAPTATION has always challenged Hollywood film-makers, particularly where American classics are concerned. This year, two of the most controversial novels in our contemporary literature have been transferred to the screen; and the arguments began even before the films were released. Philip Yordan has transformed James T. Farrell's *Studs Lonigan* trilogy of restless, amoral adolescents in Prohibition Chicago into a projected screen work of naturalism and violence. Although the director, Irving Lerner, is a well-known film editor (*Spartacus*, *King of Kings*) and creator of several impressive low-budget thrillers (*City of Fear*, *Murder by Contract*), *Studs Lonigan* is undoubtedly his first major work. Cast mostly from unknowns, with Christopher Knight making his first screen appearance in the title role, *Studs Lonigan* presents a sharp contrast to *Elmer Gantry*, adapted and directed by Richard Brooks for a cast of big-name players. Sinclair Lewis's novel about an immoralist turned preacher created a storm of protest and indignation when it was published in 1927; and in 1960, before the film's release, several church groups have already banned attendance among their followers. Likewise, James T. Farrell has denounced the film version of *Studs Lonigan* without having seen it. In a letter to *The New York Times* and a subsequent piece in *Variety*, he implied that Yordan has tampered with the overall indictments within the plot and weakened the book's tragic ending. At any rate, I thought it should prove enlightening to hear what the two directors concerned had to say about their films.

Irving Lerner

"I WAS WORKING ON *Spartacus* as supervising editor and second unit director when Philip Yordan called and said 'At last, I've got a great picture for you to direct.' It was *Studs Lonigan*. First of all, I went to the novel and underlined those sequences which I thought filmable—sequences I wanted to film, without regard to overall structure. What resulted was more than 200 pages of manuscript, and this was used as the basis for discussion. By this time it was getting on towards Christmas. I left *Spartacus* and concentrated on the screenplay for *Studs*. In ten days we had an outline; in two more days, a first draft. At the same time we were trying to find a newcomer to play Studs. Christopher Knight was sent up by an agency, and at first we found him too theatrical. Then I had him come out to Chicago where we were doing research work on backgrounds, trying to get the 'feeling' of the novel, since I wanted to see Knight in this environment. Meanwhile, we cast Studs' friends: Weary Reilly (Jack Nicholson), Paulie (Robert Casper) and Kenny (Frank Gorshin). I wanted to see how they all looked together . . . Then we gave Knight a screen test and I liked him: I think he's excellent for Studs.

"Restrictions were imposed by the need to fit everything into a specific release date schedule; our budget was low and the size of the film was limited—the characters had to be consolidated, and I wanted to get the maximum amount of money for production. United Artists felt that they could sell the picture because of the reputation of the book, but I didn't want *Studs Lonigan* to be just a representation of Irish-American life in South Chicago. It could be anyone of that period. We're fairly accurate in our period costumes, but we've tried to be more so in re-creating the mood of the times. We've tried to make the feeling of the decades covered gradually noticeable—a radio suddenly appears in the pool-room, for instance, or we've made a point of some costume style—but usually we suggest the period through things that were said, or through the look of the cars parked in the street. We wanted to symbolise the era rather than to make things specific.

"What really influenced the film a great deal is Farrell's testimony in the trial about the book and his own description

"*Studs Lonigan*": Irving Lerner rehearses a scene with Christopher Knight and Venetia Stevenson.



"Studs Lonigan": the New Year's Eve party.

of his intention in writing it. I think, generally, that authors will have a beef about adaptation: it's a very difficult and, more often than not, unsuccessful business. But here I believe we really have managed to capture some of the spirit as well as the content of the novel.

"I wanted to show the book's 'race riot' scene, but decided not to because of budget limitations. I tried to give a sense of the strong prejudices in which these people are involved, however; and I'm hoping to get, via various montages of newsreel clips, some integration of Farrell's social history into the picture. I didn't find *Studs Lonigan* anti-clerical, but that may be because the role of the Church today seems much more sophisticated than it did then. The priest is generally shown in relation to his influence on Studs: he is the only one who feels that his soul has a destiny, although Studs is weak, constantly coming back to the Church for guidance. The mother (Katherine Squire) is presented in the film as an extremely pious woman who would like to see Studs become a priest. She's not hypocritical, just completely without insight; and she is rather less formidable than in the novel.

"This, you see, is a selection of material from *Studs*—any single one of the Farrell trilogy would be a challenge, and if we hadn't selected we would have had to do a trilogy as



detailed as Satyajit Ray's . . . Besides, *Studs Lonigan* is not a juvenile delinquency film in the usual sense. There are no gang fights, for instance. The violence is expressed through prejudices, through the youths' violent attitudes towards non-Catholic girls, the influence of Prohibition upon moral degradation, and also through Studs' own fantasy life. We've utilised this to illustrate Studs' immaturity. The original screenplay had dream sequences in it, though it was later felt that these wouldn't be clear . . . Yet I did do things like a certain sequence in which Studs has a fight with his father. He then goes to a gangster movie and stands by a poster of the gangster hero, then adjusts his cap like the gangster and walks into a speak-easy. This flows into a sequence in which he imagines himself in a role that doesn't fit him: Studs talks to some thugs as though they were big-time gangsters, they hand him a gun, and everyone except Studs is playing for satire.

"There is one character in the film, Miss Miller (played by Helen Westcott), a schoolteacher with whom Studs becomes friendly because she is someone he can talk to. This character does not appear in the book, but we had to have someone who would represent Studs' conscience. Studs' completely overwhelming desire for Lucy Scanlon (Venetia Stevenson), who remains a dream—the childhood Helen who suddenly moves away from the neighbourhood—is something that has been distilled from the book. And the fact that Studs realises he is different from the gang makes him, in any sense, a hero.

"The camerawork is by Arthur Feindel and Haskell Wexler, and photographically two sequences come particularly to mind: the big New Year's Eve party at the 'Cannonball', where I can use faces and atmosphere, where the whole feeling of the Twenties and the decadence of Prohibition days can be brought out, and another sequence which combines two wakes described in the novel. I blend these into one, describing Paulie's wake, and here we used a hand-held camera to get the feeling of nostalgia, of people milling around, getting drunk, while Paulie's widow sits in a daze . . . I also like very much a fantasy scene, in which Studs visualises Miss Miller as a stripper in a burlesque house."

Later, as the director went back to work, his editor, Verna Fields, prepared to show me the party sequence. The rest of the film lay in great coils or in tins around the tiny room. From the window, I could see a small studio lake, where Laurel and Hardy used to film their pranks. I remember Lerner saying that he had been very much influenced by Fellini's *I Vitelloni* in his overall conception of *Studs Lonigan*, and that his young star, Christopher Knight, had recently left Harvard and turned towards acting, filled with a kind of disgruntled intellectual antagonism towards academics that matches the moody sensitivity his part here requires . . . I suspect, too, that Farrell deeply regrets the loss of the character who most represents himself in his trilogy: for, in the film, Danny O'Neill is gone. He was part of a world that was never made for him, and this is only Studs' world. Perhaps this was partly the source of Farrell's outburst in the press. Still, in the images before me now, the smoky scenes of lust, jazz and the faces of the Twenties, there is just the possibility that Farrell will recognise the world he made for literature, brought again excitingly to life.

Richard Brooks

"THERE'S SOMETHING UNUSUAL that I'd like to tell you," Richard Brooks began. "You know, *Elmer Gantry* created quite an explosion in 1927. Lewis was still upset about its reception when he received the Nobel Prize . . . Years later, when Lewis was reviewing books for *Esquire*, he wrote a very complimentary notice of my novel *The Brick Foxhole*. Shortly afterwards, I had to stand court-martial because I had not submitted the book for public relations approval, and Edwin

"Studs Lonigan": street corner gang.

Aswell of my publishing house corralled a few men who had seen something in my book, including Morris Ernst, Bill Mauldin, Richard Wright and Sinclair Lewis. They were all ready to come to Washington to testify on my behalf. Well, they didn't have to. The Marine Corps took away my typewriter. I left Quantico and went up to New York, where I met Sinclair Lewis in a little bar. He asked what I was doing—this was back in 1945—and I told him I intended someday to try to do some work in movies. We talked for a long time, and finally I asked him how he felt about the critical reception given *Elmer Gantry*. He said: 'I made a lot of mistakes in that book, some of them based on the fact that I was striving too hard to get all the elements of that person into one book. Get the reviews and read them . . . when they came out I wanted to kill them all, but twenty years later, I see they were right. There was a strange dichotomy within me: I liked Elmer and hated him . . .'

"So, five or six years ago, I took out an option on the book, invested my savings in the thing, and no studio would make it. And I did as Lewis suggested, reading reviews by Rebecca West, Carl Van Doren, Heywood Broun, H. L. Mencken—some of the most incredible names. They all thought the book was remarkable; and I felt, at least, that I had the counsel of all these people, plus Mr. Lewis's blessing to go ahead and use these reviews. I've used about seventy or eighty books and magazine articles in preparing to do this film . . .

"I would describe Elmer Gantry as a typical American boy: he's interested in money, sex and religion . . . I ought also to say that I find Jean Simmons a remarkable human being, and an incredible actress. In the midst of all the flamboyance and chicanery of a revival-tent atmosphere, she represents the positive side to whatever religious aspect the film has: despite the tendentious atmosphere of the religious movement she's involved in, *she* believes. It's just that the course being taken by revivalists in religion is of no real and lasting value; and without the solid basis of character on which to build this story the film might subside into caricature.

"Another important aspect of the film is its people. From Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri and Texas, these people came out here to California during the war. They formed social clubs and they maintain a certain regional quality about them. They're deeply religious people, too, and they understand not only the meaningful, emotional side of revivalism, but also the kind of man Elmer Gantry *could* have been. Most of these people live around Long Beach and Ventura, and they are all

in the film . . . I couldn't use the same faces of extras you generally see; I had to have these real, alive faces, some of them almost like faces out of Grant Wood paintings. John Alton, our photographer, has used muted, soft colours, nothing harsh, to try to bring out this quality in the faces of these revival meeting followers.

"What I've attempted in my adaptation is to deal with the revivalist side of religion, expressed through Gantry (Burt Lancaster) and to show that Sister Sharon Falconer (Jean Simmons) is a kind of unrealistic visionary. To her, Heaven is paved with gold and the laughter of God is dominant in her. Gantry is viewed by the Mencken character in the film (Arthur Kennedy) as one who sees God as an athlete with a white beard, holding lightning in one hand and a bag of tricks in the other. In the book, Gantry gets on, gets married, has aspirations towards the bishopric. In the film, he realises that he's hurting people instead of helping them: he states his desire for normal happiness to Sharon, but she wants to know about his responsibility to the people who follow him. Throughout the story, we've tried to create an empathy with Gantry.

"What I'm trying to say in *Elmer Gantry* is that revivalism can corrupt and mislead, that while it plays a big part in American religious life it can be very dangerous. But I want the audience to like Gantry himself, although he's loud and cruel and exhibitionist and blatant. He likes the things of life that we all like. The audience should not hate Gantry, which is what the book says, but they should hate what he stands for. Religion used as an ambitious device is contrasted with religion as a cathartic influence, as Sharon experiences it. But Gantry had to leave religion and go back to life.

"Some things dealt with in the novel are still too strong to portray, and I can't say in the film all that Lewis wanted to say. *Elmer Gantry* first of all provokes an emotional response and one has to put a picture in front of the audience . . . The film does say that the Church has financial problems, which is something new on the screen; and it may make some people run out of the cinema because it's a religious film that isn't a big Biblical spectacle about masses of people slaughtering each other, nor a story about a priest trying to get baseball uniforms for a boys' team and doing so with the help of a beautiful nun, nor one about a Job-like parson who perseveres through storm and strife and finally manages to win. What he wins no one is ever quite sure of. But these, as you know, are the sort of religious films we get. The American cinema has never had a picture that shows the commercial side of religion . . ."

"*Elmer Gantry*": rehearsal of a revivalist meeting, with Richard Brooks (right) and Jean Simmons.





Anouk Aimée in Jacques Demy's "Lola", a story of a night club dancer.

In the Picture

News from Paris

LOUIS MARCORELLES writes: Going by the number of films *Laloue*, it looks as though French production this year is likely to beat all records. By the end of 1960, one can anticipate that about 150 films will have been made in France or as co-productions using French capital. The extraordinary thing is that out of this total number there will be at least twenty films which should be entirely personal works, no less individual than a novel or a poem. People no longer talk very much about the *nouvelle vague* as such but rather about the "Jeune Cinéma Français", setting this in contrast to the old "quality tradition". Directors such as Claude Autant-Lara and René Clément, who more or less exemplify this tradition, already seem terribly dated in their films, cut off from their times. Clément's *Plein Soleil*, a crime story with dialogue by Paul Gégau (Chabrol's collaborator), and the new Autant-Lara film, *Le Bois des Amants*, both look desperately artificial.

After the commercial failure of *Pickpocket*, his purest film, Robert Bresson is going ahead in endeavours to set up his projected screen adaptation of *Lancelot du Lac*; but he is

having difficulties with his producers, who would like him to cast Audrey Hepburn. Henri-Georges Clouzot has just finished *La Vérité*, produced by Raoul Lévy and starring Brigitte Bardot. Clouzot's own illness, then Bardot's, held up shooting on the film, which is concerned with some of the imponderables of justice and which ought to be Clouzot's most important work. Marcel Carné, in *Terrain Vague*, is pursuing his researches into the lives of young people in France. René Clair, at last a member of the Académie Française, has directed a sketch in the film *La Française et l'Amour* and is now preparing a feature for 1961.

The vanguard of our young cinema is still made up of the group of four ex-critics of *Cahiers du Cinéma*: Claude Chabrol, Jean-Luc Godard, Jacques Rivette and François Truffaut, who are all now around thirty. After numerous delays and difficulties, Rivette has finally completed and shown his *Paris Nous Appartient*. Its subject, a very difficult and ambitious one, calls for resources and a degree of authority which Rivette was unable to command; and his film's significance is that of a contemporary document—an account of the confusions of a generation—rather than a totally realised work of art. One finds something of this same "unfinished" quality in the new films made by Rivette's colleagues. Chabrol's *Les Bonnes Femmes*, about the wretched existence of four little salesgirls in a Paris store, is content to exploit a picturesque view of working-class life. Truffaut's *Tirez sur le Pianiste* is principally striking for its air of disorientation, its creator's inability to free himself from American influences. A number of entertaining details don't really add up to a film.

The most important production in this group is Jean-Luc Godard's *Le Petit Soldat*, shot in the spring of this year entirely in Geneva. Its style, a kind of systematic improvisation, follows that which Godard made fashionable in *A Bout de Souffle*. Godard's candour in this film is both disarming and irritating: one admires his sincerity, but is disturbed by the element of moral confusion, which seems disquietingly close to the brand of right-wing extremism encountered in the work before the war of the novelist Drieu la Rochelle. The story concerns a young French deserter living in Switzerland. He is in fact working as a secret agent of the French government, and in his struggle to unmask the activities of the F.L.N. (the Algerian liberation movement) he is captured and tortured. He escapes by chance and returns to his career as an adventurer, trying to come to terms with his destiny. Godard's film confirms what one already knew: he is above all a writer in the great tradition of Giraudoux and Cocteau. Long monologues are scattered throughout the film. Morally, it is a negation.

There seems a considerable chance that *Le Petit Soldat* may never pass the censor, and it is likely to displease critics of the left as well as those of the right. Claude Bernard-Aubert, whose new film *Les Lâches Vivent d'Espoir* presents a racial issue, is also prepared for a conflict with the censor. His story: a Negro loves a white student, and racial prejudices are unleashed when they try to marry. Behind the current press campaign in the right-wing papers against the "immorality" of the young French cinema, one can discern political attitudes which can only be summed up as reactionary. On the other hand, under the impulse of André Malraux, the Minister of Culture and a man who personally has no great liking for censorship, a Commission of Aid has just been set up which will award *advance* subsidies to certain high-quality productions on the basis of their scripts. M. Malraux himself will act as the final judge. Once the film has been completed, the government will have priority in recovering its investment out of the box-office takings.

Thanks to this system, Henri Colpi, editor of *Le Mystère Picasso* and *Hiroshima mon Amour*, has been able to direct *Une si Longue Absence*. Its story, from an original script by Marguerite Duras, concerns a woman (Alida Valli) who believes that she has made contact with her husband, missing since the war. Among the more promising projects of the younger film-makers, one should also cite *Adieu Philippine*, a



Jean-Luc Godard's "Le Petit Soldat".

first feature from the short-film director Jacques Rozier, who made *Rentrée des Classes* and *Blue Jeans*. Rozier looks as though he could be the brightest new comedy talent since the young René Clair. Jacques Demy, filming at Nantes, has just completed *Lola*, a romantic story about a cabaret dancer (Anouk Aimée) and a young adventurer. And Marcel Moussy is editing *Saint-Tropez Blues*, in which he gently mocks the fashions of Saint-Tropez. Moussy, previously known as a TV writer, a novelist, and the screenwriter of *Les Quatre Cents Coups*, is like Rozier in that he should be able to bring the French cinema some of the lucidity and freshness it badly needs.

Rozier, Marcel Moussy and Jacques Demy are all in the same position as Godard, in that they are virtually the "authors", or sole creators, of their films. Other directors are working in the same conditions of complete independence; and there are an enormous number of projects and plans afoot. Eric Rohmer, for instance, wants to make *Une Femme Douce*, after Dostoevsky; Truffaut is planning *Jules et Jim*, with Jeanne Moreau; Godard will do *Une Femme est une Femme*, a remake (with Jean-Claude Brialy and Jean-Paul Belmondo) of this year's comedy *Les Jeux de l'Amour*.

The event of the season, however, is likely to be the film which Alain Resnais is now preparing from a scenario by the novelist Alain Robbe-Grillet: *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad*. The subject sounds conventional enough, a variation of the husband-wife-lover eternal triangle, but the idea is to treat it with total objectivity. "I would like people to see the film rather as they would a piece of sculpture," says Resnais. "It can be looked at from all kinds of angles, and the final choice is up to the spectator." The leading players will be Delphine Seyrig, a bi-lingual actress trained at the Actors' Studio, Giorgio Albertazzi, who played the lead in the Italian stage production of Sartre's *Les Séquestrés d'Altona*, and Sacha Pitoëff. Resnais wants the film to be "an experiment with the theme of conscience".

Louis Malle and Jean Rouch are also among the directors determined on experiment. Malle has been shooting, in colour and on ultra-sensitive stock which allows him to work at night without special lighting, a free adaptation of Raymond Queneau's novel *Zazie dans le Métro*. His object: to find a visual equivalent, rather than the Mack Sennett tradition, for Queneau's literary manner. Rouch has just finished editing his second feature, *La Pyramide Humaine*, which deals—in the improvisatory style of his *Moi, un Noir*—with the life of a

group of students, black and white, at a school in Abidjan. He found that, outside the school, the racial groups did not mix; but in the course of shooting he managed to get them to break down this implicit segregation. With Rouch's films, the cinema is writing history and at the same time perhaps helping to change it. On the Fourteenth of July, in Paris, he began work on his third feature, *Le Parisien, Comment Il Vit*, which he is making in collaboration with the sociologist Edgar Morin. His idea: to apply to a film about the people of Paris the same techniques of improvisation which were so successful in filming *Moi, un Noir* among the Africans of the Ivory Coast.

Cassavetes in London

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR writes: The first impression one receives of John Cassavetes on meeting him is that he is shorter than he looks on the screen. As soon as he starts talking the impression vanishes completely. So, at least, it was when I spoke to him in his London hotel during a brief visit to this country to arrange—if possible—a happy distribution for *Shadows* and set up—he hoped—at least one of about six possible films which were floating round in his mind for his next foray into direction.

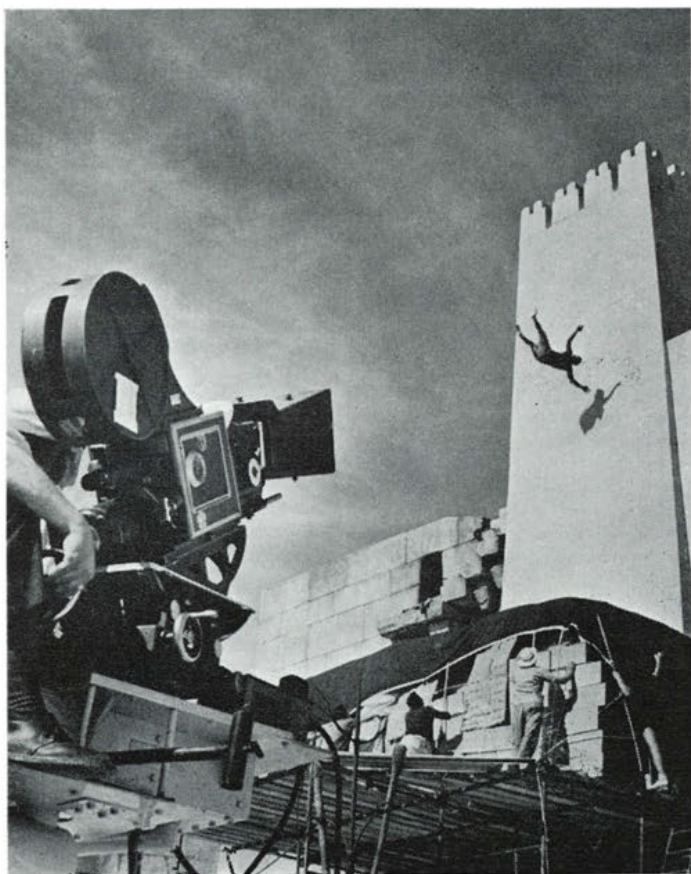
"I don't like to tell you too decidedly about my plans because whatever I say I'm going to do next it's sure to be different when I get round to doing it. There's a story—it's a comedy, though I suppose the idea's not necessarily funny at all—about how no one, however hard he tries, can get out of his group or category: we take the wickedest man in the world, who determines to reform and succeeds in doing so completely, except that people won't accept him reformed—he has to return quietly to being wicked because that's what people expect of him. Then there's a film we'd like to do over here about Christ's trial. Well, it hasn't really much to do with Christ himself: it's about the deliberations of the Sanhedrin and all takes place in one set. And there's a story we'd like to do in Spain, about how people in incompatible classes just can't communicate with each other: he's an itinerant worker and she's a dance-hall prostitute . . ."

Would all of these be improvised in the same way as *Shadows*, I asked. "Some of them would, but others no. The one about the Sanhedrin, for instance—that would have to be an accurate piece of documentation, completely scripted; the actors couldn't just improvise a subject like that as they went along."

How did he, a self-admitted egotist who regarded directing primarily as a means of self-expression, settle to directing actors in such a remote and intangible fashion? "Well, as an actor I know how directors can kill off an actor. You know often they just treat them—even featured players who have an important part in the plot—as though they weren't there. But the actor is the only person in a film who works from emotion, in whom the emotional truth of a situation resides. If you kill that you kill the film too. Of course,



The last scene of Louis Malle's adaptation of the Raymond Queneau best-seller "Zazie dans le Métro".



Echo of "Intolerance". A Spanish stunt man takes a fall during the shooting of Nicholas Ray's "King of Kings".

I enjoy films which don't live in this way—I guess we all do sometimes—but it's not what I want to do in the cinema. I want to get the live emotional truth across, and you can only do that by giving the actor his head to live his part and create it as he goes along."

But where, then, did the director's self-expression in film come in? Well, in choice of theme to begin with, then in choice of actors to embody that theme the way he wanted it. Cassavetes himself chose actors on appearance first of all, and then on a sort of intuitive emotional rightness. Like Dreyer, I commented, and sent him off into a rhapsody on the greatness of Dreyer in general and *Jeanne d'Arc* in particular (Zavattini and the Visconti of *La Terra Trema* are other enthusiasms). Back on his own work, I asked how the actors were kept to the theme without obvious direction. "Oh, sometimes it's awful: when you can see it all going that little bit wrong, and know just what would put it right, but can't say so because that would break the actors' confidence and introduce a false reaction. You see my reaction is an outside reaction—as director I have to be objective—but theirs is inside and true, whether right or wrong from the point of what I want them to convey. The big thing is not to let the actors know precisely what the ultimate point of what they're doing is: as soon as they know they try consciously to express it, instead of letting it emerge as in life, and so they falsify it. But as it was, though on *Shadows* I had to scrap most of what we shot in the first of eight weeks' shooting, later on, once they relaxed and gained confidence, many of the things they did shocked even me, they were so completely, unpredictably true."

News from Spain

FRANCISCO ARANDA writes: Although Spanish production has not startled us lately with any revelations, the industry itself has expanded until it now ranks as one of Europe's major cinemas. Two international events have given some confirmation of this: the Berlin Grand Prix award to Cesar Ardavin's *El Lazarillo de Tormes*, and the complete production in Madrid of one of the world's most expensive films, *King of Kings*.

King of Kings is going to be lavish indeed. DeMille's version cost one and a half million dollars; the new one will cost more than eight

million. It is a Super Technirama production; and its huge sets, designed by Georges Wakhévitch, are literally packed into Spain's two biggest studios, Sevilla and Chamartin, with shooting also going on in several villages around Madrid. Half the town seems to be working either with the crew or among the extras. Shooting will finish in October and the world premiere is scheduled for next Easter.

Direction is by Nicholas Ray, from a screenplay by Philip Yordan (*Johnny Guitar*, *The Harder They Fall*, etc.) and the Italian writer Diego Fabbri. The cast includes Jeffrey Hunter, as Jesus, Robert Ryan, Siobhan McKenna, Hurd Hatfield, Ron Randell and the Spanish star Carmen Sevilla. A serious religious film, not merely a mammoth one, is apparently the intention; and the publicity department has informed us that "Producer Samuel Bronston was granted an audience with the Pope, with whom he discussed the script in detail. As a result, Bronston was given full Church co-operation." Plus: "numerous Protestant church leaders have also contributed their advice and help."

The vogue for Biblical and historical films is keeping other Madrid studios busy. *The Colossus of Rhodes*, with Rory Calhoun and Lea Massari, is just finishing; *The Rebellion of the Slaves*, with Rhonda Fleming, will soon be starting. These are two examples among many.

Meanwhile, Spanish production proper continues on its own way. Bardem is shooting *A las Cinco de la Tarde*, based on Alfonso Sastre's play *La Cornada*, a psychological drama about the relationship between a bullfighter and his impresario. This will not, it seems, be a work about the "national fiesta" but an analysis of the moral and economic interdependence among the people involved in it. Other productions with some potentialities include Ladislao Vajda's *Maria, Matricula de Bilbao*; a new version of Calderon's classic tragedy *Life is a Dream*, by Luis Lucia; and a children's version of *Don Quixote*, by Eduardo Maroto.

The most promising new director, however, may be Marco Ferreri. His *El Pisito* (*The Little Flat*) was the best film shown in 1959. A *comédie noire* about a boy who marries an old woman in order to inherit her flat, so that he may finally marry his girl, it was made in a slightly delirious style, emerging none the less as a bitter study of conditions of life among the Madrid middle class. His *Los Chicos*, which was shown *hors concours* at Cannes, was in expertly made but has been cheered by a large sector of the Spanish press as one of the few movies which really shows the authentic background to the life of ordinary adolescents in Madrid. Ferreri's third film, *El Cochecito*, is again a malicious comedy. Its subject: an old man's desire for a motorised invalid chair, in which he can roll about the streets, see football matches, and enjoy public sympathy.

Children and Television

BRIAN GROOMBRIDGE writes: The O'Connor Committee's Report *Children and Television Programmes*, issued last July, is an important document, both as a follow-up to the 1959 Nuffield Report *Television and the Child*, and as a stage in the process of improving the quality and the public accountability of British television.

The Report's main starting point was the fact that anything from 2.5 to 5 million children are likely to be watching evening television programmes, at least until 9 p.m. And the programmes they see in the evening, it asserted, are giving children: "an insufficiently varied picture of the adult world"; an excessive ration of music-hall humour; too much and too detailed violence; pop lyrics with "a degraded attitude to sex"; "nightly gloating (in quiz programmes) over rich rewards for puny efforts"; and plays which often show "a casual approach to marital fidelity". The Committee's main concern was that the television organisations should develop "a climate of opinion in which it would become inevitable in producing programmes to consider the special needs of the family audience." As a means to this, its recommendations included suggestions that *The Radio Times* and *TV Times* should give information more helpful to parents; that an advisory body should be set up whose duties would include study of the impact of programmes on children; and that more research should be undertaken on the whole subject and the problems involved.

The BBC and ITA, who had themselves set up the O'Connor Committee, provided its Report with a foreword which made no reference to such matters as the specific criticisms of programme content or the appeal for research, but firmly opposed the introduction of "new or specialist machinery" for supervising the suitability of programmes and was equally firm in stating that "the needs of children" could not be allowed "to determine the nature of all television output up to 9 p.m." Press reactions, on the whole, took the side of the Committee. "In three hundred cavalier words," said

the *Daily Telegraph*, "both organisations rejected the proposals for ridding the programmes . . . of the sordid and depraving elements which persist." The *Daily Mail* took a similar line. "Britain's TV chiefs . . . virtually ignore the 'Clean Up TV' demand."

In fact, and whether or not this was their intention, the BBC and ITA contrived to give the impression that they were prepared to leave responsibility in this important area to parents, who would somehow have to ensure that, as they themselves put it, "television was not misused". The insistence that parents should be held responsible for what influences children in their own homes certainly has its justification; though the BBC and ITA would make it easier for parents if they accepted the Report's recommendation that further information about programmes should be given in *The Radio Times* and *TV Times*.

The BBC and ITA can be forgiven, too, for believing that the suggested apparatus of advisers and advisory bodies, checking up on producers and even telling them what particular shots and sequences are unsuitable for children, would merely mean a proliferation of committees and an unworkable limitation on creative activity. Whether one accepts the O'Connor Committee's detailed strictures on programme content or not, problems remain which involve the whole question of what is "suitable" or "unsuitable" entertainment—as much for adults as for children. Would it be more "suitable", for instance, if all the violence, lewdness and acquisitiveness of which the Report complains were crowded into the hours after 9 p.m.? What, in any case, are the assumptions behind many programmes, and don't many ostensibly innocent entertainments achieve a subtle degradation more insidious than the familiar hazards of violence? Is it enough to urge balanced programming at peak times without exploring the problem: should "balance" assume present cultural divisions in society, or should it (as some programmes now do) try to dissolve them? The sort of questions the Report raises, in other words, need not be confined solely to children. Its most positive suggestion, however, is contained in the appeal for more research; for research which would help in more efficient programme planning, and research which would consider television's influence on the attitudes and ideas of its audience.

Antonioni's "La Notte"

NELLY KAPLAN writes: A few miles from Milan, in the grounds of the smart Barlassina Country Club, Michelangelo Antonioni has been shooting his new film, *La Notte*. It concerns a couple (played by Jeanne Moreau and Marcello Mastroianni) whose life together has seemed happy enough until they abruptly wake up to its emptiness: love has become no more than a tepid friendship and a set of habits. Throughout one particular night, in the midst of a carnival, they try to rediscover their lost relationship, or to look elsewhere for some new enthusiasm.

"When I walk in the street and look around me," Antonioni told me, "I feel ashamed. Ashamed of what people later on are going to think about us. We are so much more backward than we should be! I'm not just talking about things like clothes, machines, habits of life, but especially about our way of thinking about our own emotions. Take a couple like that in *La Notte*. They are living peacefully enough, having their ideas of what life and love are about. Then, in a flash of lucidity, they realise that their emotions are really dead . . . And they are terrified. The reason is that man, who is no longer afraid of the scientific unknown, is scared of the moral unknown quantity. He's afraid to open his eyes and admit that most of the theories and conventions that have developed over the years about the relationships between men and women bear not much relation to human nature, to the instinctive truth. And, of course, fear is inhibiting: people would rather keep to their habits than risk looking for *their own* truth. That, at least, is the question I try to raise in the film."

Antonioni's future projects are still fairly vague. He is talking, however, of a film called *Macaroni*, which he will probably script himself with Tonino Guerra. This will be the story of a group of Italian civilians, interned towards the end of the war in a German concentration camp. The Germans pull out before the American troops arrive, and in the interim there is a week of anarchy, of total chaos. It is the climate of those days that Antonioni wants to re-create—a fantastic atmosphere which seems to linger on in the minds of some survivors more intensely even than the memories of dangers and horrors. It's an atmosphere which revives a kind of nostalgia of excitement.

Tony Curtis in Robert Mulligan's "The Great Impostor", based on the remarkable career of Ferdinand Waldo Demara.

Festival at Pula

OLWEN VAUGHAN writes: Yugoslavia's seventh National Film Festival was once more held this year in Pula, in the sixth largest and best preserved of all the Roman arenas. Every night an audience of ten to twelve thousand people foregather to watch a selection of the best Yugoslav films of the year. Production is still mainly concerned with partisan and war themes, though this year there were several exceptions including a good football comedy, rapturously received, entitled *Mr. President Centreforward*. But the first prize rightly went to *The Ninth Circle*, a moving story set in occupied Zagreb which becomes a powerful plea against anti-semitism and proves that in Franc Stiglić the Yugoslavs have found a director of considerable stature. The applause of such a large gathering constitutes in itself an unforgettable experience, and this year the wildest and most prolonged applause was reserved for Dusan Vukotic's humorous and satirical cartoon *Piccolo*.

The Yugoslavs, like the French, have a natural passion and love for the cinema. This is reflected in their films and this is why one feels that slowly but surely the industry is making good progress.

Production - U.S.A.

Shooting in New York

JOHN FRANKENHEIMER: A juvenile crime subject, *A Matter of Conviction*, from a novel by Evan Hunter, who wrote *The Blackboard Jungle*. For Harold Hecht's Contemporary Productions and United Artists release; cast headed by Burt Lancaster.

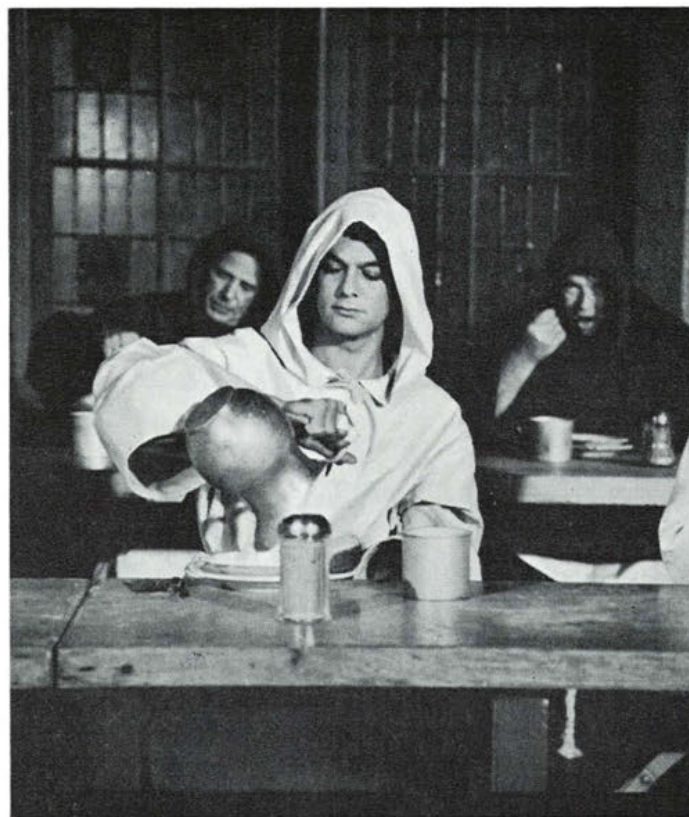
JACK GARFEIN: The second film by the director of *End as a Man* is *Something Wild*. A Prometheus Production for UA, shot by Eugen Shuftan and starring Carroll Baker, Ralph Meeker and Mildred Dunnock.

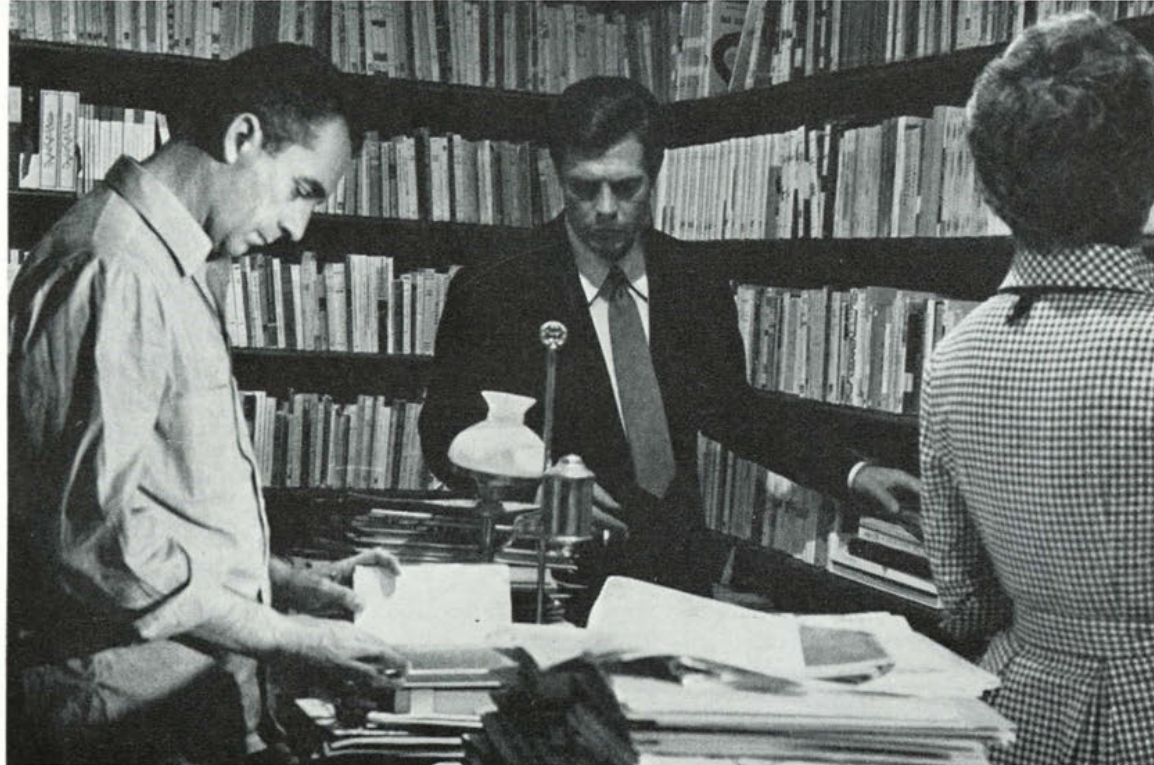
ELIA KAZAN: *Splendour in the Grass*, from a play by William Inge, being made on Staten Island with Natalie Wood.

Shooting elsewhere

JOHN HUSTON: In Reno, *The Misfits*—Arthur Miller's original screenplay, from his own short story, for Marilyn Monroe. Also starring Gable, Clift, Wallach, Thelma Ritter and Kevin McCarthy; a Seven Arts Production for UA release.

JOSHUA LOGAN: In France, *Fanny*, from the stage musical, based in turn on the Pagnol film, with Leslie Caron, Maurice Chevalier, Horst Buchholz and Charles Boyer. A Mansfield Production for Warners.





Michelangelo Antonioni has been filming "La Notte" in Milan during the summer. Its story: a couple, married for several years and ostensibly happy, gradually realise that their relationship has gone dead, that it no longer has any meaning to them. As in "L'Avventura", Antonioni's real theme is an investigation into the delusions and illusions of love.

Left: Antonioni and Marcello Mastroianni.

Below: Jeanne Moreau and Marcello Mastroianni, who play the leading parts. Monica Vitti is also in the cast.

ANTONIONI and





VISCONTI

Luchino Visconti's "Rocco and his Brothers", his first film since "Notti Bianche", was the Italian cinema's chief entry at the Venice Festival. It concerns a Sicilian family who emigrate to Milan, trying to establish themselves in a strange city. Rocco becomes a boxer; his brother, Simon, is involved with a prostitute, Nadia, and murders her in an outburst of jealousy. The climax of the film: the family's realisation that Simon must surrender to the police.



Above: Visconti on location with Annie Girardot (who plays Nadia) and Renato Salvatori (Simon). Like "La Notte", Visconti's film was made largely in Milan.

Above right: Suzy Delair in a scene from "Rocco and his Brothers".

Right: Katina Paxinou, who plays the widowed mother of the five brothers, embraces her son Rocco (Alain Delon).





EAST- WEST MEETING GROUND

CYNTHIA
GRENIER



IN ITS OWN RATHER special way, the XIIth International Film Festival of Karlovy Vary, held last July in the pleasantly Edwardian Czech watering place, distinguished itself both from its sister festivals in other lands and from its own predecessors. What set it apart was scarcely the quality of its films, which, with one or two exceptions, must unfortunately be classed as dull through mediocre to downright bad. Its distinction lay in a number of extraordinarily outspoken and lively press conferences all clustered together two or three days before the end of the festival, in which one had the unusual opportunity of witnessing a kind of running aesthetic battle between Poles and Soviets.

In the days immediately preceding the outbreak of artistic hostilities, a certain climate was gradually being created which indirectly prepared the way for the exchange. The first piece in the pattern was the screening of the official Czech festival entry, *Smyk* (*The Man with Two Faces*), directed by 27-year-old Zbynek Brynych. This was a sumptuous, vaguely expressionistic film filled with technical bravura. Although burdened with a tortuous story line involving a spy disguised as a clown, plastic surgery and an American spy school in West Germany, visually it was highly, if not always successfully, imaginative, in a style as far removed as possible from the classic social realist traditions. The film, in fact, looked rather like Wajda gone completely wild in CinemaScope.

At the Czech press conference, held in the fussily ornate Florentina Bar, young Brynych and his colleagues were closely questioned by fellow Czechs. A steady hum rose from the twenty or more translators whispering translations to the little knots of journalists crowded about them. Why, asked the Czechs, should a spy—a traitor—be shown sympathetically, and why did the film not have a happy ending? (The hero dies, relatively unrepentant, in a car crash.) The answer that such cases did exist and that the film was, in sort, a reflection of life, did not seem to satisfy the questioners.

An American critic, struck by the director's obvious fascination with various manifestations of modern western design, such as mobiles, modern furniture, abstract art, modern architecture, asked whether this implied his approval of them or condemnation of them as deplorable signs of western materialism and decadence. And, if approval, whether—since much of the film was supposed to take place in Prague—he thought such interiors were typical of Czechoslovakia. Brynych answered simply and honestly that such decors were far from typical in his country, and that probably average Czech audiences would not like them, but that it was up to him as a film-maker to try to raise the taste level of the masses, to make them appreciate good design and modern art. This in itself was something of a surprise, since one had thought that modern art, like jazz and other western cultural products, was still very much anathema to the people of the Communist East.

The same night saw the East German press conference, which ran from midnight until three in the morning, with the director Konrad Wolf being raked over the coals, mainly by Poles and Yugoslavs, for his rigidly conformist, sternly social-realist *Men with Wings*. Wolf and the East German delegation stubbornly and lengthily defended their film in tired, jargon-loaded Marxist terminology.

In the morning, once again at the Florentina, the Soviet press conference was held in the wake of the screening of their principal entry, *Seriozha*. (This is a slight, charmingly made film about a little boy which finally won the Great Crystal Globe of the festival.) Here, a tendentious but perceptive

Above: Czechoslovakia's "Smyk". Left: Russia's "Seriozha".

question from a French critic got well under the skin of the Soviet delegation. Why, asked the critic, did the Soviet film-makers feel such an apparent compulsion to make simple, moral films seemingly aimed at audiences exclusively composed of children or child-like adults? The Soviet delegation froze on hearing the translation, glared at the Frenchman, whispered together in rapid consultation. Then the head of the delegation rose to refute this attack. Mikhail Romm, sixty years old, with a personality not at all dissimilar to that of certain oldtime Hollywood producers—aggressive, confident and dynamic—answered with righteous indignation by begging the question. The Soviets, he said, preferred to make films which, like children, were pure in heart, rather than ones which were “filthy” like those of certain other countries. And glared pointedly at the representative of the land of the New Wave.

The next day a festival institution, the Open Forum, was held in Bath House Number One, a huge and splendidly Victorian structure next to the festival palace. This brought together some two hundred critics, film-makers, delegates and journalists to listen to various national representatives who delivered prepared little talks on the festival theme: The Man of 1960. Until the final speech of the morning, the talks were rather predictable and faintly dull uplift expositions of how the man of 1960 was an optimist. Most people had slipped their earphones down about their necks and were drowning over their third *café turkú*. But the last speaker, a slight young Pole, Alexander Rylski, in horn-rimmed spectacles and a yellow leather jacket, jolted everyone wide awake. Calmly, he stated that he had not seen a good Soviet film in years and that their mealy-mouthed morality was unrealistic and detrimental to art.

As the Forum broke up for lunch, everyone was asking his neighbour if he'd heard right. Throughout the day, it was possible to sense some sort of tension building up. That evening saw the Polish film, *The First Year*, which Rylski had scripted. Unfortunately it was not a very good film, although it seemed that the scenario might have been interesting from what could be pieced together out of sketchy translations of the lengthy dialogue.

At ten the next morning, Mikhail Romm hurried to the microphone at the Open Forum, a sheaf of notes crackling in his hand, and ripped unceremoniously into Rylski. “After the way Rylski spoke yesterday here, I was expecting that we were going to see a real masterpiece last night. Instead what did we see? A banal, cheap, poorly made, third-rate piece of work.” The scorn in his voice was clear even without being able to understand a word he was saying. Peremptorily, he asked by what right Rylski presumed to criticise Soviet films. Romm seemed most offended, however, that the Pole had not said he was sorry that Soviet films were not good. “Why, he didn't even express the hope that they might improve,” thundered Romm. He further implied that Rylski's attitude was revealing a distressing lack of solidarity in the socialist camp.

The Polish press conference was held immediately afterwards, at the usual stand of the Florentina, and inevitably someone asked Rylski if he had any comment to make about this attack. Rylski grinned engagingly, asking for a few minutes to prepare a reply. When it came, it was delivered with a good-humoured equanimity and a choice of words which surprised almost everyone. “I don't see why Romm wants to put this discussion on a political basis,” Rylski said pleasantly, rocking back and forth on his heels as he spoke. “Cinema is primarily an art form, and art and politics are separate. Now I admit, for my own film, I'm not particularly happy about it. There are a lot of things I would like to change. But that's not

really pertinent here. For me, a film is good or bad. Not capitalist or socialist. A bad socialist film is just as offensive as a bad capitalist film. I am only interested in good films, no matter where they are made. That's what I was trying to say yesterday.”

A kind of shocked silence followed this statement; then a small burst of very enthusiastic applause from the Yugoslavs and a smattering of Western journalists. Suddenly, everyone was talking at once. A whiff of the heady air of free speech had blown into the room; and Czechs, Hungarians, Bulgarians, East Germans were popping up to ask questions.

What about existentialism? And off the Poles went into a long theoretical discussion to show that existentialism and Marxism need not be mutually exclusive. Why did the Poles persist in making films with unhappy endings? Surely the *people* didn't like it? . . . “We make them that way because that's the way life is: you can't sugar-coat the pill. And the *Polish* people do like our films; it's been proved by box-office records.”

Soviet *bloc* critics and film-makers shook their heads marvellingly, then got into brisk little arguments among themselves; some, it seemed clear, defending the Poles. They got the Poles talking on a dozen different subjects, some of them far removed from the cinema. One had the impression of being in a room of terribly thirsty people who were suddenly given water to drink. Everyone forgot about lunch; sitting there, talking and listening, from eleven until three. The Polish delegation was admirably articulate, lucid and composed.

Finally, at the close of the conference, Western journalists asked the Poles whether they might not have risked incurring some official displeasure by having spoken so frankly. “Of course not. It's different in our country, you see, from the others,” they said proudly.

The mood established by this free speaking carried over into discussions both private and public throughout the remainder of the festival. Spirited little discussion groups would form at most of the evening receptions. Czechs were concerned to find out what westerners really thought about *Smyk*, whose free-wheeling style seemed to have left most of them a little baffled and worried.

Nearly everyone, including the Russians, wanted also to talk about the New Wave, a term which has now gained a tremendous currency throughout East European cinema circles. Few, if any, of the people present had apparently seen even one of the New Wave films, but all had read about them, knew the titles and the plots, and had their ideas about it all. Young directors, whether from Poland, the U.S.S.R., Hungary or East Germany were referred to as New Wave, although just exactly what was meant by the term was not clear. It seemed to imply youth, and a look of something fresh and slightly different. In official talks, the French new wave was necessarily frowned upon, since its films were neither moral nor, from the Communist point of view, social. Georges Sadoul, the Leftish French critic and historian, one day expressed in the Open Forum the wish that perhaps the young French film-makers were passing now through a kind of apprenticeship, and would later be won over to the progressive cause.

By the end of the festival, it had not been resolved whether the man of 1960 was an optimist or a pessimist, and no one really cared very much about what films won which prizes. But everyone from both East and West seemed to feel something akin to gratitude to the XIIth festival of Karlovy Vary, for giving them the chance to witness and participate in a rather exciting brush with the impact of Free Speech behind the Iron Curtain.

the festivals



Japan: *Ningen no "Joken"*.

Venice

VENICE WORE CAP AND GOWN this year. At any rate, the controversial appointment as the Festival's new director of Dr. Emilio Lonero, secretary general of the Catholic Film Centre, professor in the history of art, graduate in literature, philosophy and law, certainly seemed to lend an academic air to the proceedings. There were homages to Chaplin, Eisenstein and Bresson; some perhaps unadventurously mounted retrospective programmes dedicated to Griffith, Grémillon and the British war film; discussion programmes on such themes as Documentary and Human Truth, the Problem of Children's Films, Cinema and War, Justice, Crime and Punishment; not to mention the inclusion of *Ben-Hur* in the Information Section, and the choice of another well-worn "classic", *Pollyanna*, as the customary end-of-term treat.

All this might have been admirable if there had been more films estimated to support this air of scholarly application, or something to choose between the general pedantry of the

evenings' entries, which included seven war subjects, and the drab and faded humanist gestures characterising most of those other films not in the running for prizes. Admittedly I arrived too late for Czechoslovakia's *The White Carrier-Pigeon*, Yugoslavia's *The War* and Italy's *La Lunga Notte del '43*, though none of them appeared to have aroused much excitement; and my press deadline meant leaving before Cayatte's *Le Passage du Rhin* and, infuriatingly, Visconti's *Rocco and his Brothers*. But the impression of a fatigued and directionless European cinema emerged dispiritingly out of the dozen features I did manage to see, leaving Japan, not for the first time, to walk away with the honours.

The Festival's biggest *débâcle*, after so much advance publicity, was the gradual crumbling of hopes for some evidence of an Italian renaissance. Even newcomers like Enzo Provenza seem bedevilled by the star craze, currently centred around Claudia Cardinale and Renato Salvatori. Both turn up, the film's sole *raison d'être*, in Provenza's *Vento del Sud*, a lugubrious melodrama about young love caught up in the toils of Sicilian vendetta. She throws herself down a stair-well;

Salvatori, whose main charm would appear to lie questionably in a stolidity Alan Ladd might envy, walks passively into the Mafia's bullets in a deserted market square. Despite its veneer of tart comedy, Antonio Pietrangeli's *Adua e le Compagne* is almost as awful. An unlikely story about four girls, put out of business when a new Italian law closes the brothels, who open a restaurant in the country only to be driven back on the streets after three honest, carefree months, this orthodox star-vehicle dives shamelessly straight into the old humbug. The prostitutes are sentimentalised; mother-love, religion, romantic tribulation and Emmanuele Riva's predilection for hysteria run amok; and the whole dishonest mess ends up with a rain-drenched Simone Signoret (outstanding as always) lurching down a long, studio-lit street.

Though its subject—restlessness, moral disgust and every conceivable kind of evasion among a group of idle-rich young Italians—is becoming almost as familiar, Francesco Maselli's *I Delfini* is at least considerably more urgent in its preoccupations. These are given suitably raw and nervous expression by Tomas Milian as the rapist, Anna Maria Ferrero as the alcoholic and Betsy Blair as the penniless countess whose villa, parties and pretended wealth retain her leadership over her younger friends. The film is full of neatly observed set-pieces, but neither these nor some other less judicious shock effects can prevent it seeming superficial as a whole. The middle section, deprived of narrative structure and tension, sags, and if Maselli's undeniably strong personality makes surprisingly little impact, this may well be because it is less his own than (the beach trip and the groupings give it away) Antonioni's.

A far more vital impression in the field of the small-scale personal work was made by films from Mexico, Spain and Japan. Benito Alazraki's *Toro Negro* suffers, like his *Raices*, from poorish acting and moments of technical and narrative uncertainty; yet this story of an eager young bullfight aficionado who gets his chance in the arena, only to lose it, deploys a fresh, poetic irony, especially in the bitterly dejected closing sequence, while offering much new and interesting backstage information. Marco Ferreri's *El Cochecito*, a genial Spanish fable about an old man's manic determination to own a motorised wheelchair, even if getting his own way means poisoning his whole family, is a little gem of eccentric portraiture. The idea is original, and Ferreri's affectionate, sometimes riotously imaginative approach is more than equal to it. But my own particular favourite in the Information Section remains Mikio Naruse's *A Woman Ascends the Stairs*, irresponsible though it may be to prefer a commercial CinemaScope production to a vibrantly national "quickie". Basically a novelette about a widowed night-club hostess in the years of professional decline, struggling to support her selfish family and finally sacrificing her chances of marriage because of a hopeless love for a married businessman, the film is lifted by its penetration, subtlety and continually fascinating detail to an unexpectedly serious level: as civilised as a minor Ophüls, but infinitely more satisfying. The leading role, tailor-made for a Japanese Feuilleton, is realised sublimely by Hideko Takamine, last seen in *The Rickshaw Man*.

In comparison with these three films, most of the big competition entries fell as flat as pancakes. The Russians were more tendentious than ever, Vladimir Vengherov's *The Sky of Leningrad* welding our own stiff-upper-lip tradition on to a patriotic war story about a heroic fighter squadron doomed to slow and laboured decimation. The French, alas, gave Albert Lamorisse his fanciful head. *Le Voyage en Ballon*, shot almost entirely from a helicopter in what is skittishly described as HeliScope, the result of two years of experiment towards eliminating vibrations, recounted the adventures of a small boy and his inventor-grandfather in a balloon which can go as high

or as far or as fast as its pilot wishes. Little more than a succession of attractive magic-carpet views and bravura sequences, notably a stag-hunt and the skimming of snow-clad Alpine peaks, the film went even further than the same director's *Le Ballon Rouge* in its cold triumph of Disneyish expertise over genuine imagination.

Rather more incongruously, a hint of Disney also filtered through in the Polish entry, *Krzyzacy*, Aleksander Ford's vast medieval pageant based on Sienkiewicz's *The Knights of the Teutonic Order*. If there was one shot of a sleepy-eyed owl there were a dozen, not to mention bears, boars, splashy bathing scenes, exquisite pastoral settings, blindings, hand-choppings and dismal dungeons. Three hours long, Dyali-Scoped and delicately Eastman-colored, this is the acme of mandarin film-making: it leaves absolutely nothing out—not even stuffed horses for panoramic tracking shots of battle carnage—except the human element.

I have left to the end what was for me the Festival's richest and most haunting experience: Masaki Kobayashi's *Ningen no Joken*, variously known as *No Love is Greater* and *The Human Condition*, which more than fulfilled the expectations aroused by Donald Richie's article in the Spring issue. Magisterially shot in CinemaScope, the 3½-hour story tells how a young, newly-married pacifist escapes military service by becoming manager of a bleakly situated mine in Manchuria when Japan's war effort was at its peak. His attempts to stem the hideous cruelty of the overseers brings him into direct conflict with the Kempeitai. After helplessly standing by, just another Japanese oppressor, during the beheading of seven escaped prisoners, he tries to salve his conscience and redeem himself in the eyes of his coolies by attacking the executioner. His reward is imprisonment and unspeakable torture, then unexpected release followed by immediate conscription. With the jeers of the prisoners for whom he had so hopelessly struggled ringing in his ears, he leaves for the front, his personal dilemma unsolved.

As in *The Burmese Harp*, one senses an affinity between the Japanese "conscience" film and Russian classic literature. I was reminded of Dostoevsky's *The House of the Dead*. There is the same disturbing juxtaposition of extreme violence and grim humour, horror, and quiescence. Kobayashi's film obviously lies close to his heart and his own wartime experiences. Its skill, conviction and tremendous power command total respect, so that its occasional repetitions and lapses into the obvious simply don't matter. This is screen journalism of a titanic order, the sort of thing only the Russians used to do. If the rest of the almost completed trilogy, adapted from a six volume novel, is anything like as good, Japan will have a Donskoi on its hands.

PETER JOHN DYER



"I Delfini": Tomas Milian and Claudia Cardinale.

Edinburgh

AN INFORMAL CONFERENCE between film-makers, delegates and the festival organisers, held at Edinburgh's well-equipped Film House, this year discussed the question of Edinburgh's contribution to the annual festival cycle in terms of help to producers and the dissemination of information. Edinburgh has always tried to encourage new artists and new trends and has given considerable screen space to countries scarcely represented elsewhere. Why, then, did the 1960 festival contain an unusually large number of damp squibs? Some countries, such as Poland, understand the special atmosphere of the festival and again sent a well-selected entry (one film by an established director, Munk, and two others by promising new names, Morgenstern and Lesiewicz.) Hungary's official entry, *Red Ink*, on the other hand, suggested a bureaucratic rather than an artistic choice and merely confirmed the conservatism of its equally "official" director, Viktor Gertler.

The festival selection committee probably needs to select and reject a little more judiciously; and this year again proved how unfortunate it is that Edinburgh and Venice should compete simultaneously. It is almost inevitable from a European producer's viewpoint that Venice should get the real plums and Edinburgh the pips. This year, France restricted herself to *Les Années Folles*, an over-long yet fascinating compilation of the 1920s and '30s (but scarcely a festival blockbuster), and Paul Bordry's *Un Jour comme les autres*, an independently made romantic excursion into territory populated by the shadows of Bergman, Malle and Renoir. Italy promised the latest work of Rossellini or Bolognini, but neither turned up in time for Italy's gala evening, and Japan was equally reticent. Why are the Japanese hiding the latest films of Ichikawa and Ozu? Are they considered too formidable for the West?

Despite these gaps, the programme included a sizeable selection of prizewinners from other festivals, plus the usual large but uneven entry from Eastern Europe. Many of these films have already been covered in SIGHT AND SOUND. The most pleasant surprise was *White Nights*, Ivan Pyriev's adaptation from Dostoevsky and his best film for many years. Like Heifits in his recent Chekhov adaptation, Pyriev seems entirely at home in this world of misty romantic entanglements, though he never quite equals Heifits' purity of feeling. A comparison with Visconti's version is almost inevitable: the Italian film had a keener sense of design, but otherwise the Russian adaptation is decidedly superior in its playing and general atmosphere. Beginning in a light, almost dangerously detached manner, the film slowly involves us in the dreams and desires of these three strange characters until it makes their fate a matter of supreme importance. Incidentally, the introduction to the Dreamer gives Pyriev a wonderful opportunity for take-offs on Douglas Fairbanks and Russian ballet. Other assets are the excellent, hazy Sovcolor and a brilliant use of music—Rachmaninoff for the love scenes, Rossini for the affectionately observed visit to the opera.

A second Russian film, *The Sun Shines for All*, directed by Constantin Voinov, is a contemporary story of a blinded war veteran who returns helplessly to his wife and family. His recovery is depicted with tenderness and some passion, and there is a sharply atmospheric evocation of the little town and the blind man's house. Though weakened by a script containing too much didacticism and coincidence, this is an encouraging example of the younger Soviet school.

The Czech entry, *Romeo, Juliet and Darkness*, again harked back to the war in its story of a Jewish girl who is hidden from the Nazis by a Czech youth. Jiri Weiss has set his narrative against a dramatic (perhaps over-dramatised) background of occupied Prague. Although carefully made, with an imaginative use of sound, it is all somehow lacking in urgency. Weiss handles the central relationship with tact but little passion, and the playing of Dana Smutna as the girl is a trifle wan and over-studied. The best acting comes from Jirina Sejblová (the

elderly wife in *Wolf Trap*) as the boy's mother. Science fiction is not a genre commonly associated with Eastern Europe, but *The Silent Planet* (East Germany/Poland) certainly passed muster as far as its special effects were concerned. Despite heavy direction, its moments of charm included a baby robot playing chess and the sight of Yoko Tani dispensing liquid food and medical attention to the space ship's crew of super intellectuals.

Edinburgh had its fair share of flashy techniques this year in the strictly documentary entries—zoom lens shots and relentless, pounding sound-tracks now seem to be the main points of appeal. Herman van der Horst's first feature, *Fiery Love*, continually submerges some first-class material shot in Dutch Guiana in a mad symphony of fancy cutting and the inevitable zooming. A pity, because there are moments when a real and sympathetic talent breaks through. A second Dutch film, *Village on the River*, by Fons Rademakers, is much less spectacular and was consequently almost overlooked. Virtually a series of comic/tragic incidents in the life of a village doctor, it owes allegiance to obvious Scandinavian models, yet creates a strange, dark-hued world of its own. Rademakers' sensitivity is best seen in the episode dealing with the death of the doctor's wife. Here technique and emotion are well matched, and a single zoom lens shot is really made to count.

With the exception of *The Criminal* (reviewed elsewhere in this issue), the English-speaking entries were ill-chosen and mainly talentless. (It was surely unwise to devote two key Sunday showings to *I Aim at the Stars* and *Song Without End*.) Even the smaller independent producers disappointed this year—*Flight*, a Steinbeck adaptation by a San Francisco group, had atmospheric locations but inadequate directorial control and impulse.

The many short films covered a wide field of technological processes: we were again instructed in various branches of oil and steel production, shown methods of pond fish culture in Malaya, introduced to overseas development schemes accompanied by *nobilmente* music and sonorous commentaries. What was missing in most of these films was the spark of imaginative flair. It could be found fitfully in *The Builders*, an American construction film without commentary; in *Roughnecks*, a Canadian oil film with a brilliant night drilling sequence; and in half-a-dozen others. Otherwise, the tone remained defiantly official and academic. What about humour? Another cartoon by the ingenious Rumanian, Popescu-Gopo, called *Homo Sapiens*; and *The Interview* by Ernest Pintoff, now the leading American cartoonist. A small masterpiece of words and design, it shows how marvellous animated films can be when they scarcely move at all.

JOHN GILLET

Berlin

WRITE ABOUT THE BALLYHOO or write about the films: for some reason, the two alternatives facing anyone asked to cover any festival seem more sharply defined at Berlin than elsewhere. The ballyhoo is more concentrated, perhaps, more hypnotically well organised. But that doesn't change the fact that writing about it leads us nowhere. After all, everyone knows and accepts the uses to which festivals are put by all manner of opportunists, and—for better or worse—always will be put. Far better to talk about films; fight for films to be better dressed than starlets, or more bravely undressed; fight for the right to splash mud in the face of fools; and, of course, fight for our seats when the bell goes.

This year Berlin seemed to me rather more exciting than in 1959—as big an improvement, perhaps, as could be expected without the full participation of all the Eastern cinemas. And, if one looked in vain for a masterpiece, one sensed a healthier political atmosphere and found several interesting films hinting at the developments (or, maybe, lack of developments) in the industries they represented.

The festival was inaugurated with *Les Jeux de l'Amour*, the first of three French entries. Produced by Chabrol and stylishly directed by Philippe de Broca, this fresh and youthful comedy was notable for its off-beat, intelligent humour and the way it transcended the bitterness of its overall rejection of compromise. *A Bout de Souffle* introduced in Jean-Luc Godard a talent as positive and vigorous in its own way as that of Resnais or Truffaut. I was particularly struck by the way this film's fluid sense of narrative rhythm permeated deep down into the action; by the very personal style of story-telling, uncommercial in expression but, I suspect, commercial in effect; by a long love scene as good as anything in the festival. Then there was the new Bresson, *Pickpocket*. Not a definitive masterpiece, perhaps, like *Dames du Bois de Boulogne* or *Condamné à mort*, but the old characteristic sense of sound, image and economy of time all marvellously in evidence.

The West German entry was a predictably well-shot film by Wolfgang Staudte called *Kermesse*. Nazi oppression, the revolt of conscience, denunciation of those Germans with Nazi records and loyalties who are today acting out a democratic role—the story is a bit of a cliché by now. But the power of the film's imagery and the intensity of its rhythm should preserve it from a purely local appeal. England sent *The Angry Silence*, which was much admired. I liked the theme, the construction and the acting; in fact, I felt this could have been a first-class film, with some of the qualities Zavattini and de Sica put into their work, but I never made up my mind whether it was the script or the shooting which went wrong.

But I knew my own mind where the two American entries, *Inherit the Wind* and *Wild River*, were concerned. I suppose Kramer thinks he has made a high-minded, cerebral film. So he has, only about a hundred years late as an expression of liberal ideas. Of course there's a wonderful display of acting from Spencer Tracy and Fredric March, though I imagined that I already knew these performances before even seeing the film. Kramer was really a good producer. It's his talent as a director I've never been sure about. He just can't tell a story in visual terms, the actors stand around without any eloquence in the grouping and his camera angles are dull. As for *Wild River*, Kazan seemed to be present nowhere except in the credits. The overacting looked like the work of a bad disciple of Kazan, with Clift forcing his eyes and his movements into looks and gestures that could mean anything, and Jo Van Fleet salvaging what she could by the one means at her disposal—her personality.

The Cacoyannis film, *Our Last Spring*, is uneven. There's the same poetic sense evoked by settings and striking individuals that one finds in all his films, but this time it is let down by the cast and a poorly told story. Some of the imagery, and the sequence of the burying of the boy, just manage to save the piece.

Lazarillo de Tormes, the Spanish film by César Ardavin which won the Golden Bear, would have quietly passed muster with most people if it had not actually won its prize. The photography is good, some of its actors are interesting, but the picture is miles away from its purpose and origin—a wonderful picaresque story from seventeenth-century Spain. It would have made a magnificent subject for Buñuel, and will turn out to be as much a surefire money-maker as *Marcelino*: a thriller for aunts.

For the rest, there were two Italian entries that revealed the indifference Italy seems to feel towards this festival, two forgettable Japanese films, and some Danish, Swedish and Indian films which had me thinking sadly of Dreyer, Bergman and Ray. There was also a film of mine, *Fin de Fiesta*, received by the German public in silent irritation.

The President of the Jury was Harold Lloyd.

LEOPOLDO TORRE NILSSON

Above: Pyriev's "White Nights"; centre: Ferreri's "El Cochecito"; below: Weiss's "Romeo, Juliet and Darkness".



South of the Border



JOHN GILLET

APART FROM THREE OR four festival entries each year, European critics have been given few opportunities to assess the progress of the multifarious Latin-American cinema. Buñuel and Torre Nilsson excepted, films from a whole continent tend to blur together into a composite image of whippings, slashings, rape and religious hysteria—an all too easy target for jaded festival goers. A violent cinema, in fact, and a troubled one; but it has always been difficult to discover what it is that makes these films so bad.

I was able to find part of the answer at the Latin-American festival held at Santa Margherita last summer. Here, thanks to the initiative of Columbianum (an Italian cultural organisation aided by UNESCO), film-makers and critics were able to see and discuss a score of films from over half-a-dozen states. A very benign Rossellini presided over the Jury, of which I was a member, and whose film-making representatives included Andrzej Munk and Agnès Varda. Our task was a relatively easy one, for the few distinctive works stood out quite clearly from the mediocre majority. A best selection prize to Argentina, with special reference to the work of Leopoldo Torre Nilsson, gives an indication of the most interesting territory uncovered at the festival; and it provides a useful starting point for this survey.

Torre Nilsson's family has many connections with the cinema. His uncle was a cameraman. His father, Leopoldo Torres Rios (who died last April) began working in the 1920s as an adapter of foreign films; in the Thirties and Forties he made many commercial successes, as well as one or two more experimental films with marked expressionist influences. After working on some short films, Torre Nilsson collaborated with his father on two pictures before becoming an independent director in 1953. The five films that followed are as yet unknown in Europe: Torre Nilsson himself is inclined to reject most of them, although he expresses some satisfaction with *Días de Odio* (1953) and *Graciela* (1955). Then in 1956 came *The House of the Angel*, which marked both his entry into European film circles and the beginning of his close collabora-

tion with the writer Beatriz Guido. Her novels, with their sharp atmospheric qualities and economical plots, seem to provide a literary basis for his impressionistic style.

The House of the Angel hinted at many of the themes to be developed in their subsequent work: the corruption of innocence in youth and adolescence, the effects of an enclosed upbringing in a bourgeois society, and the ever-present influence of the Church. The mood had a kind of nostalgic pessimism, a hark-back to a world of fixed social and sexual taboos, expressed through a style heavy with angle shots, looming close-ups and sudden stabs of music.

The next two films, *El Secuestrador* (variously translated as *The Beach* or *The Kidnapper*) and *La Caida* (*The Fall*), were open to more than one interpretation. Here, insidious influences have turned the child's world into a near-nightmare. In the former, we see the effects of poverty on a group of adolescents who accept cruelty and pain as part of the natural condition of existence and sometimes find an innocent escape in tragedy. This is a film of sudden contrasts both in mood and in the quality of its inspiration and judgment. It is marred by heavy melodramatics, yet its impact is undeniable. At the end, the children go gaily off down the road accompanied by a jaunty, hollow jingle on the sound track. This is no facile, optimistic conclusion as some critics have professed; rather, it is an implied criticism of the world these children are forced to inhabit. It is also Torre Nilsson's favourite ending among his own films.

La Caida also draws memorable portraits of its family of *enfants terribles*: not little monsters really but children whose natural impulses to mischief have been distorted into a grotesque form of play-acting. The presentation of the adult world is less successful—various vague literary influences and a rather tired romantic fatalism combine to rob the climax of its expected revelations. Torre Nilsson, who is very frank when discussing his own work, agrees that the film loses definition after the arrival of the mysterious uncle, attributing this to a miscalculation on his part and, possibly, to the choice of actor. Stylistically, we are still in a world of shadowy interiors, low-angle shots and sharp cuts, derived in part from rather démodé European models. (Judging from other films in the festival, this tendency consciously to "put on" a style is not confined to a single director: it is a characteristic I shall return to later.)

With his most recent films, *Fin de Fiesta* and *Un Guapo del*

"Un Guapo del 900".



900, Torre Nilsson has advanced towards new themes and concepts: the influence of established and corrupt political ideas on the impressionable and unattached younger generation in the former film and the clash of political and sexual loyalties in the latter. Both films are noticeably more straightforward in execution and both evoke their period with a subtle use of locations and heavy-toned interiors. *Fin de Fiesta* (which was reviewed at length in the Spring number of *SIGHT AND SOUND*) attempts to cover a wide range of personal and social themes, becoming slightly congested in the process. But its best scenes have a resonance and fervour which suggest that this is an area of experience Torre Nilsson feels eager to explore. He feels less affection for *Un Guapo del 900*, an adaptation of a famous play (not by Beatriz Guido), possibly because it is a less personal creation. The story is quite intriguing: the loyal bodyguard of an electioneering political boss kills the lover of his master's wife and goes to prison rather than reveal the woman's indiscretion. All ends in a gentlemanly fashion when the boss realises the sacrifice his *guapo* has made. Torre Nilsson has given it a highly mobile treatment without sacrificing the obvious theatrical meatiness of the parts; there is a curiously Bergmanesque love scene and considerable surface gloss. Some of it certainly has the look of a stylistic exercise. Detailed comment, however, ought to be reserved until a sub-titled copy becomes available: some Argentinians present found much of the film's quality in its dialogue.

Five films seen in Europe and a growing international reputation as Argentina's leading film-maker. I have tried here to indicate some of the changes in style and approach which have characterised Torre Nilsson's development; but it is slightly more difficult to assess his artistic position in the context of world film-making. His talent and fluency are undeniable, especially when exploring the private worlds of children and the values of a repressive society. His main weakness, perhaps, is not knowing what to leave out. The internal pressures of a highly commercialised industry are not easy to shake off, and sometimes he may mistake melodrama for tragedy (as in the middle sections of *El Secuestrador*) or fail to detect the awkward visual clichés of *Fin de Fiesta*. The very nature of his position makes him something of a rebel; and this, coupled with the complexities of his own personality, occasionally makes it difficult for him to achieve a complete identification with his material.

2

Torre Nilsson helped to clarify the difficulties an Argentinian film-maker may expect to encounter during a press conference held at the rather unlikely hour of one in the morning on a floodlit hotel roof. The tall director, looking a trifle formidable in his heavy dark glasses, and the animated and huskily eloquent Beatriz Guido were in good form, switching unhesitatingly from one language to another. What emerged from the questions and answers was a picture of an industry geared to produce about 35 pictures a year, relatively few of which could be said to reflect what Torre Nilsson called "the little human truths" about his countrymen. Although there is no official censorship, a good deal of moral and social pressure is exerted against films with strong realistic or political themes. The situation seems to have some parallels with Italy and the post-war neo-realist movement.

Clearly, the Argentinian industry is not an easy place for individualists. Yet new tendencies are slowly emerging, and the founding of a production and distribution enterprise by Torre Nilsson and his friends, called Producciones Angel, may



Torre Nilsson's "*El Secuestrador*": the children ride off on the ice-cream cart in the final sequence.

be a useful step forward. They hope to handle about eight films a year, including Nilsson's own productions and those of talented newcomers, some of whom are his protégés. One of these young directors, David José Kohon, has recently completed a first feature called *People of the Night*, a love story with tragic overtones shot on Buenos Aires locations. A promising short film by Kohon seen at Santa Margherita made a passionate, hard-hitting attack on housing inequalities in Buenos Aires, though rather overdoing its tricky montage of sound and cutting effects: "cinema" with a capital C, in fact. ("You would probably say that about my early shorts, too," Torre Nilsson commented drily.)

Post-Peronist criticism and oblique social satire turned up in a number of other Argentinian films, sometimes enclosed in a broad comedy like Simon Feldman's *El Negocio* or in a teenage delinquency drama (*El Jefe*, by Fernando Ayala). Feldman, a painter turned film-maker, rather overworks the amount of humour to be extracted from a situation involving a monopoly in horse manure, while the attempt to capture a Clair-like atmosphere does not come too easily. Nevertheless, his film has some nice jabs at fairly obvious targets (the police, business tycoons) and an air of easy-going improvisation. *El Jefe* (*The Chief*) is a much stronger conception, filmed with a sharp Americanised surface in both photography and cutting. According to Argentinian sources, the leader of its young hoodlums is supposed to be a symbolic Peron. It is an interpretation which gives certain scenes an added interest, but the story development itself is over-predictable and the technique leans too heavily on close-up violence and shock tactics. Perhaps the trouble is that teenage rebels now look much the same in all countries.

Despite its difficulties, the contemporary Argentinian cinema does not lack vitality. Unhappily, a completely opposite impression emerged from the retrospective shows at Santa Margherita. Last minute difficulties affected film availability, so that there was nothing from Torres Rios or other veterans such as Lucas Demare (who was represented rather inauspiciously in the main shows). Waiting for the surprise



"A kind of Wyler picture . . ." Deep focus, staircase and vengeful heroine in the Brazilian "Ravina".

that never came, we sat through dim 16 mm. prints of *Prisoners of the Earth* (heavily contrived social drama made in 1939 by another veteran, Mario Soffici); a *Cavalcade*-like family piece, and several very talky comedies full of coyly virginal heroines and bustling little men in moustaches. One small discovery: these films were surprisingly similar in tone and execution to the average Italian productions of the Thirties.

3

A concentrated dose of Brazilian and Mexican pictures induced, it must be admitted, a feeling of acute depression. I hope, though, that the following comments will be accepted as taking a constructive rather than a destructive approach. Here are two national industries in a state of crisis, pouring out a stream of celluloid which bears all the evidence of compromise, frustration and half-baked idealism. Both cater for a large and mainly unsophisticated audience; and they share the dubious honour of having the loudest musical scores in the world—an anonymous stream of thickly orchestrated fuzz which constantly tears the heart out of the images.

Judging from conversation and discussion at Santa Margherita, the overall artistic dilemma stems from a variety of internal restrictions. Brazil, apparently, is unlike Argentina in

"La Dama de la Muerte": a Chilean melodrama of uncertain date but no uncertain trust in the virtues of ornamentation.



having no real renegades. Cavalcanti's stay in the middle Fifties was not long enough to leave a permanent impression, and other potentially interesting figures such as Lima Barreto (of *O Cangaceiro*) and Nelson Pereira dos Santos have difficulty in setting up congenial subjects. An historical piece called *Na Garganta do Diabo* (*The Devil's Throat*) by a relatively new name, Walter Hugo Khoury, dissipated its initial promise in the familiar hotchpotch of violence and rape, savage Indians and war. This was a pity, because Khoury clearly has a wild sort of talent, an eye for dramatic exteriors and much firmer technical control than his colleagues. But what real chance is he likely to have of development?

For an example of the higher lunacy, and a collector's item in itself, one can look at the Brazilian *Ravina* ("jeune fille mystérieuse" as the synopsis had it), a mixture of Daphne du Maurier, vintage Gainsborough and the Old Dark House. This roaring, raving melodrama takes the least likeable aspects of the Latin-American cinema and turns them into a marvelous, unconscious parody; the climax, including a running fight all over the house and a frenetic display of whipping, reduced the audience to near-hysteria. Nevertheless, after



Historical melodrama: "Na Garganta do Diabo".

about an hour, I would have gladly exchanged it for even a very minor Buñuel.

Nobody seemed to know why Buñuel himself was totally unrepresented at Santa Margherita, though rumour had it that the Mexican authorities thought the festival was mainly devoted to children's films and religious subjects. Mercifully, we were spared the worst excesses of the Mexican religious epic, although there were several examples of the typical commercial film that Buñuel loves to hate. *Chicas Casaderas* (*Marriageable Girls*) by Alfredo Cravenna, for instance, is a "white telephone" film *par excellence*, incredibly vulgar and fatuous and with a nasty attempt at social moralising at the end. Even the custard pies in a slapstick sequence failed to land squarely on target.

On the evidence of films of this kind, it is obvious that only some forceful rethinking can save the Mexican cinema from its own stagnant conventions. But there seem few signs of any serious break in the machine. New names are scarcely in evidence; and, of the older generation, Fernandez has not



Another kind of romanticism: a scene from Buñuel's version of "Wuthering Heights", still unseen in Britain.

made anything of interest for years. Possibly a few more independent producers might affect a change: thanks to Barbachano Ponce, for example, Buñuel, Carlos Velo (*Torero*) and Alazraki (*Raíces*) have been able to achieve some of their most personal work. Even when ideas and technique are at a minimum, the Mexican cinema's exploitation of violence seems as strong as ever. In the films of Buñuel and Eisenstein violence becomes a symbolic element and a reflection of a national anguish. In a piece like the 1957 *Los Salvajes* (*The Savages*), close-up views of whipping and bleeding backs are lovingly detailed for their own sake, in the same way that the West has attempted to create an audience for the messier type of horror film. A disquieting thought.

4

Here we have the consequences of a policy and a tradition built up over many years. What are the causes? The fact that many of these films display little or no directorial control and are poorly acted is probably due as much to inadequate shooting schedules (especially in Mexico) as to any basic lack of talent. The generally high standard of exterior photography is a notable exception. Although the film-making histories of these countries are very long, their film milestones are still comparatively few. Lacking a strong national style to fall back on, many film-makers have found themselves drawn towards a facile kind of exoticism. This fact, combined with the obvious stress of working in a politically restless society, has turned even the firmly nationalist artist into a cosmopolitan sampler and adapter of fashionable wares. The house in *El Jefe* is lit in a determinedly Wellesian manner; post-war realist trends are copied and watered down in the Brazilian cinema; youth is presented with all the jazzy aggressiveness of the French and American schools.

Most bizarre of all, a Brazilian critic is reported to have categorised *Ravina* as a kind of Wyler picture (as a matter of fact, it has got deep-focus photography and a vengeful heroine!). It seems likely that these strong foreign influences are emphasised by the large number of European technicians (or those of European descent) now at work: German, Italian and Slav names abound on the credit titles, together with those of such English visitors as the cameraman Chick Fowle. And

many producers, directors and writers have close contacts with Europe.

I am not denying, of course, that overseas contacts and impressions can often lead to increased artistic awareness. The main problem confronting these artists is to decide what to accept and what to reject. For the less than first-rate, it invariably means succumbing to all the temptations; and a final example from Brazil, *Cara de Fogo* (*Face of Fire*), presents the dilemma in its saddest form. A promising initial situation introduces a family arriving to start a new life on a farm. A sudden change of mood takes us into sinister melodramatics, complete with ghostly visitations, then to a kind of sub-Western ending, with shootings, cattle stampede, and two absurd songs. The result: total disaster, because nobody knew what sort of film they were trying to make. Once again, the germ of a truly national style is corrupted and distorted at the source.

In this survey I have tried to assess some of the problems of Latin-American cinema from the standpoint of a European critic. I have been obliged, that is to say, to restrict my comment to the material available in Europe, and this is far from comprehensive. I am assured by Latin-American colleagues that there are some encouraging things going on both in the fictional and documentary fields, which makes the non-appearance of these films at European festivals all the more regrettable. This article, then, can be only an interim statement; the work of discovery should go on, including, if possible, a carefully selected season at the National Film Theatre.

Meanwhile, we must be grateful for what we have seen of Buñuel, Torre Nilsson and a few others whose tenacity has broken through the barriers of opposition and apathy. Many of the cinema's best artists have been rebels and renegades of a kind; and in their present state of development, the cinemas of South and Central America seem to need all the rebels they can find. Time, though, is on their side.



Leopoldo Torre Nilsson (right) at the Santa Margherita festival.

Film Reviews

SHADOWS

PERHAPS IF *Shadows* (British Lion) had made its appearance two years ago, it would not have seemed quite the unique achievement it appears today. Then one still hoped that the contingent of directors from American television—directors such as Martin Ritt or Sidney Lumet—would not become engulfed by the general banality of Hollywood; and that productions such as *A Man is Ten Feet Tall* or *Twelve Angry Men*, with their new excellence of playing and characterisation, would prove to be forerunners of a whole new movement. Hopes were dashed, and have stayed dashed, and in the current period of dreadful night the merits of *Shadows* gleam.

The circumstances of the film's inception must be without parallel in the cinema. It arose out of a series of improvisations by actors in the Variety Arts Studio of New York. Improvisations, as Stanislavsky discovered, are a valuable stimulus to the actor's creative imagination; and John Cassavetes, director of the New York studio, devised a basic dramatic situation to accommodate his mixed group of white and coloured students. The results were so successful that the idea of making a film from them was born. A reference to the enterprise on a TV programme brought subscriptions and the project was completed for 30,000 dollars. The film was improvised, scriptless, for the screen.

Of course such a method, and such resources, involved great difficulties. With insufficient means to buy permission to shoot in the streets, a vigilant eye had to be kept on the police in order to evade obstruction charges. The camerawork, consequently, is of variable quality, particularly in the exterior off-Broadway scenes. The film has none of the anonymous gloss we have come to think of as inseparable from the American screen. Instead there is a strength of purpose, an authority which comes from everyone in the act being fully aware of the whole artistic intention.

The dramatic situation which Cassavetes devised for his actors was as follows. A light-skinned Negress meets and sleeps with a white boy: she is deeply attracted to him and it is her first sexual experience. When he discovers that she is a Negress, and that one of her brothers is very dark, unmistakably a Negro, his feelings become strongly ambivalent. The dark brother is a night-club entertainer who finds his work with "strippers" degrading and longs for something better. A second brother, also light-skinned, is a curious in-between, and his character is one of the film's triumphs: he is the white sheep of the family, a would-be musician who spends his time drifting from bar to bar, in society but not of it, a night creature flitting around the fringes of two worlds.

These are the main characters, and there is one more: New York itself—or rather the twilight set, a mixture of intellectuals, tarts and loafers; anonymous drifters of the big city between nightfall and dawn. And from them is distilled a strong feeling of loneliness, of hard assured surfaces and uneasy centres, of deep insecurity.

Cassavetes' method was to allow the actors to improvise for as long as possible and then, in the long editing process, to select the most telling parts of their exposition. Naturally this does not make for a firm architectural construction. But the essential truth of the performances is always compelling and completely vindicates the method. I would like to cite a short sequence of events which may give an idea of the film's texture at its most concentrated. The girl, after breaking with her seducer and rejecting his lame efforts at reconciliation, has agreed to go out with a Negro boy. Whilst her brothers entertain their friends in the apartment, she keeps him waiting in a calculatedly cruel and tasteless act of denigration. Her initial sexual disappointment has left her with a neurotic thirst for revenge, a shrill need to provoke without giving satisfaction. Ready at last, she leaves, exchanging a long look with her first lover on the stairs, while he forces his way into the apartment determined to make the apology which will assuage his own conscience.

At this point one of the film's best expressed themes finds its clinched expression: the gulf of incomprehension between blacks and whites. Yielding to the white man's insistence, one of the brothers relaxes to listen to him; but the words, consciously well-intentioned, bristle with unconscious insult, and the Negro's comments become cynical and knowing. The white man leaves, and the two brothers join in a burst of laughter after the tension. They, whom we have seen alienated from each other by their own colour gradations, are at least united over this issue. In narrating this short sequence I have inevitably coarsened the events; they are not so patently overt; they exist in a natural flow of feeling, in the absolutely right emotional level of the exchanges. And it is this



Ben Carruthers (left) in a scene from "Shadows".

which is so impressive, and which is sustained for so much of the film.

But not always. Sometimes one is aware—particularly on a second viewing of the film—of the actors talking themselves up to the level they know to be right. The scene in Grand Central Station near the end of the film is a case of this, when the dark brother becomes resigned, however bitterly, to his existence as a third-rate touring artist. *Shadows* is not a film in which issues need to be resolved. It captures the tensions of its society on a vividly expressive level, and that is its strength.

I have mentioned the character of the misfit coloured boy, so searchingly portrayed by Ben Carruthers. I must mention, too, Anthony Ray as the girl's seducer, and Lelia Goldoni, an Italian actress who plays the girl, a dark beauty of undeniable talent. For them, as much as anything else, *Shadows* is a landmark.

DEREK PROUSE

PICKPOCKET

THE STORY OF Bresson's latest film is a strange one. Michel (Martin Lassalle), a sensitive and confused solitary, is compelled by an uncontrollable weakness to pick pockets. A sympathetic Police Inspector and Jacques, a kind but self-righteous friend, try to help him, but he is unable to give up his vice. Inevitably he is arrested and sent to prison, where a girl named Jeanne who was once Jacques' mistress comes to see him. Slowly the past takes on meaning for him as they fall in love; and as they embrace in the final moments of the film Michel murmurs: "Ah, Jeanne, what a curious path I had to take." This curious path to love which Michel must take to atone for his inexplicable guilt is the theme of the film; and in making this journey, most of the time non-comprehendingly, Michel must first be betrayed by the Police Inspector and later misunderstood by his friend Jacques.

An odd story, yet one well rooted in literary history. Michel, like the hero of Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground* or Lafcadio in Gide's *Les Caves du Vatican*, keeps a diary in which he records this secret life of his which, though he can't give it up, has lost him respect, comfort, and ease of conscience. Like his predecessors, Michel is totally immersed in recording his sensations, in dramatising his secret; and in showing us this, Bresson gives us a glimpse into the life of one very unusual type of pickpocket.

For Michel, life is like a spy's journey into an alien land. Though every moment is dangerous, the real test of courage is to confront the menace of strangers on the packed trains of the metro. This is the most important part of his day: a weird relationship is set up with the stranger, weird partly because the stranger knows nothing about it and partly because the robbery is not primarily for financial gain (Michel admits his takings aren't often worth the risk) but for erotic satisfaction. Money to Michel is a symbol of sexual rather than economic power: only by rendering the stranger impotent is Michel's anxiety for a moment allayed. The pickpocket can only live as long as he is destroying the anonymous, affluent society about him.

For hours alone Michel practises his black art as seriously and as sternly as any virtuoso pianist. He slips watches off water-pipes, slides wallets through newspapers, and flexes his fingers. As we look at the world through his eyes, objects take on unusual qualities: a skirting board becomes the edge of a treasure chest, and wallets, watches, and newspapers become magical properties like the toys of a conjuror. When Michel meets his colleagues in a distant bar their prestidigitation grows into a grand ballet of wallets gliding through jackets from pocket to hand against the sonorous chords of Lully's music. This ballet reaches its climax on a sunlit railway station at the seemingly dead hour when passengers wearily climb on to trains and prepare for the long journey. With pickpockets around, this moment takes on a mysterious vitality as shifting wallets glitter and hands like cobras rustle through pockets.

Yet the price Michel must pay for his way of life is heavy. He remains a spy, and a spy without a native land. Even in entering his own room he walks on the brink of disaster. He slides round the door, feeling his way with finger tips, sniffing the air warily for lurking danger...

It is in these documentary moments of *Pickpocket* (Mondial) that Bresson shows his mastery as a director. A neurotic world is created without trick photography: menace and boredom are developed

partly by the use of the same stations, trains, buses, and even the same extras in different crowds, partly by Bresson's subtle camerawork, and partly by Bresson's sense of timing. Bresson suggests, he never states: and this he manages mostly by his cutting. His talent for building shots into sequences, and sequences into a whole film is an exceptional one: in its delicacy and elliptical gravity one feels that Bresson, like Eisenstein, has gone back to a study of Japanese poetry and drama. Yet a fine sensibility alone doesn't make a work of art. The ability to interpret intelligently is required, the ability to make the necessary connections; and this we do not find in *Pickpocket*.

Take for instance the character of Michel. What in fact is the weakness which drives him to "an adventure in theft for which he was not made"? Recent sociological and psycho-analytic knowledge should give us some idea, but Bresson seems indifferent to these findings. (Disturbing overtones in the film suggest he isn't conscious of them at all.) Michel himself is clear only on one point: he isn't a pickpocket for financial gain. Otherwise he is hopelessly confused. Early on in the film he puts forward a superman theory as banal as Loeb and Leopold which in no way explains his behaviour. A little later he says more plausibly: "I wanted to escape. I wasn't getting anywhere." Yet even here there is obscurity, for Michel claims he needs to escape because he can't bear "the load of the world"—which he defines in passing as his mother's illness and his father's dysomania. We are never shown this drunkard father nor are we told why an egoist like Michel would be so extremely affected by immediate family troubles. Clearly, Bresson is not interested in the nature of imprisonment: he is only interested in the desire to escape—and this he takes great pains to illustrate. Michel is shown fleeing from France (without luggage or passport!) and when he is in prison (his cell and garret room significantly seem almost identical) it's not the bars that worry him but "the unbearable matter of being caught". Even the pin table on which he sharpens his reflexes is seen as a symbol of his destiny. He too is beaten down like a ball through the flickering lights of society to the inevitable trap.

Yet what is Michel trying to flee from—his neurosis, his selfhood, the human condition? In *Un Condamné à Mort s'est Echappé* (an earlier Bresson with many parallels to *Pickpocket*) a similar theme was treated realistically; enough anyway for it to make sense on a literal level—it was surely clear enough why its protagonist wished to escape from the Gestapo. In *Pickpocket*, however, the far from realistic action compels us to try to work out the nature of the escape.

This would be possible if there were some conflict. Unfortunately, all the characters (including the strangers on the metro) have the same sensitive, histrionic outlook on life as Michel. There is only one noticeable distinction: between the guilty who learn to love (the poor in spirit who shall inherit the earth) and those who lack this kind of understanding. Even the Police Inspector acts towards Michel not as an antagonist but rather as a somewhat startled father



Martin Lassalle in "Pickpocket".

confessor involved in the same metaphysical game. The characters in fact are shaped to *illustrate* Michel's (or Bresson's) sensibility, rather than to *criticise* it; so that the film gives us a picture of a curiously insulated world, on the surface soft and gentle, but beneath inexorably schematic. Its deficiencies are revealing: because there is no difference in planes of awareness, there is no humour; no one takes up a liberal position; and, most disturbingly of all, no one is aware of his motives.

At first one may be impressed by the mystery surrounding these characters, until one realises that they are only mysterious because they are unable to create their own destinies. None of them in fact is free. They remain puppets manipulated by their creator, forced to move along "the strange paths of love"; and the word "paths" in this context signifies tracks already worn and determined. The undergrowths of choice and possibility on either side are ignored. One is tempted to adapt to this film Sartre's words on Mauriac: "M. Bresson has put himself first. He has chosen divine omniscience and omnipotence. But films are made *by* men and *for* men. In the eyes of God, Who cuts through appearances and goes beyond them, there is no film, no art, for art thrives on appearances. God is not an artist. Neither is M. Bresson."

ERIC RHODE

THE ENTERTAINER

IF ARNOLD WESKER HAD WRITTEN *The Entertainer*, one hasn't much doubt that Jean Rice and not her father, Archie, would have been its chief character. In fact, and rather awkwardly, Jean insists on elbowing her way towards the centre of the play. It is through her eyes, at the outset, that we see Archie and the rest of the family; her decision to break her engagement could mean almost as much, at the climax, as Archie's choice of failure on his own terms rather than security on someone else's; and she is the character through whom Osborne has elected to make his own comment, to link the dingy world of Archie Rice with the world of the Suez action and protests in Trafalgar Square and a half-formulated but bitter rebellion against conformity.

Yet Jean Rice's existence as an individual is always precarious: where Jimmy Porter lives, she attitudinises. And if *The Entertainer* ultimately seems a failure, quite a share of the responsibility must lie in this reluctance to come to grips with the problem of Jean Rice and her proper place in the play. Osborne writes with authority about failure. He has a ferocious understanding of the way Archie's mind works, of the appalling patter and the shabby-cynical songs; the ranting insolence and the throwaway back-chat; the way he bullies his wife and the way he falls into the familiar pattern of a routine

seduction. Archie Rice has lived for a long time with defeat, and underlying everything he says is the sense of decay and despair. But *The Entertainer* is not just a character study of a music-hall comedian. It is a social play, and it is in this territory that Osborne seems to me cold about people and emotionally self-indulgent about ideas.

Whatever one's reservations about the play on which it is based, *The Entertainer* (Bryanston/British Lion) is a landmark in our cinema. It was a brave film to make, and for all its limitations it has been bravely done: the level of conviction and concern, the savage humour with which a climate of desperation has been created, the whole effort to relate the immediate subject to a larger context, are as rare as they are courageous. Anyone making this kind of film in Britain is on his own, in the sense that he has no screen tradition to guide him. If he takes his tone over-much from the stage, who is to blame him?

Osborne uses words less as tools than as weapons, and the first problem in adapting *The Entertainer* must have been that of coming to terms with his style. The play alternates two elements: the claustrophobically enclosed scenes in the Rices' flat and the stylised music-hall interludes, when Archie directly confronts the theatre audience. On the screen, the music-hall is bound to become solid and actual, the place where Archie works, and this quality of direct communication with the audience has to go. A second audience, the one we can see on the screen, intervenes; and Archie becomes more pitiful, more easily sentimentalised (which is a tactical mistake) because we now see his deplorable act in its whole tawdry context. On top of this, the film adds a third element: as in *Look Back in Anger*, we are taken out of the emotional cockpit of the flat into the world of shops and pubs and railway stations. The Morecambe locations are conspicuously well used, and the combination of an emotional and an ironic comment in a scene such as the memorial service parade is something purely of the cinema. Yet the writers—Osborne himself, Tony Richardson and Nigel Kneale—have not faced the main difficulty. The claustrophobic tautness is not just a stage technique but the means by which the play clinches its emotional grip. Let it relax, and we are left with a series of isolated impressions rather than a dramatic entity.

It scarcely seems accidental that the film's most effective episodes are those which had no place in the play: the beauty contest, Archie's encounter with Tina Lapford, the hard little innocent from Lancashire, and her ferocious mother and cowed father, the caravan love-making, and the final collapse of Archie's aspirations in the squawking rage of Mrs. Lapford's telephone call. This whole sequence of events is more or less self-contained; and, having been written with the screen in mind, it leaves the director room to make his own comments. Back in the flat, however, with poor Phoebe's gin bottle and her board school reminiscences, with Billy Rice's bumbling memories of the good old days and Archie's strained and desperate flippancy, we are also back in the world of stage dialogue. The director's job here is mainly to interpret; and it may partly be Tony Richardson's still limited experience as a film-maker, partly his and most of the cast's reliance on the way they did things on the stage, that makes much of this look and sound theatrical. Osborne's characters talk at rather than to each other: a sense of communication has to be established.

Tony Richardson has learnt from *Look Back in Anger*, and there is authority as well as precision in some of *The Entertainer's* best scenes, such as the caravan seduction, or Archie's meeting with Jean on the patch of wasteland overlooking the fairground, or the ironic side-glances at a seaside town solemnly *en fête*. *Look Back in Anger*, though, had a driving impulse which *The Entertainer* lacks, in that its plot development and comment were integrated. *The Entertainer*, as a play, scarcely has a plot: its dialogue works as a series of emotional statements, or it does not work at all. The film has a good deal more narrative; and the result, particularly in the second half, is that slabs of incident—the meeting with the impresario, old Billy Rice's death in the wings on the opening night, his funeral, Jean's decision to break with her fiancé—stand out clumsily. Exactly what, for instance, has made up Jean's mind for her? Why does this scene come where it does? Is it even dramatically inevitable? Apparently it was not always thought so, since it was not included in the original print of the film shown to the Press last April.

Acrid and smouldering, like a winter bonfire, *The Entertainer* still has a flame of intelligence at its centre. It is ignited, strikingly, in some of the performances. Laurence Olivier's Archie Rice is an impersonation, certainly, a dazzlingly skilful exercise rather than a



"The Entertainer": Joan Plowright.

total realisation of a character. One can see the mechanics of the performance, the calculated pauses and vocal mannerisms, the actor's cold certainty. But Archie, after all, is a man performing in life, condemned to live with the sham identity he has created. The other players can be named together: Joan Plowright, Alan Bates, Albert Finney, Shirley Ann Field. They share the same qualities of likeableness and seriousness, energy and a kind of unstressed and unshowy honesty. This kind of purposeful acting is something encouragingly new on the British screen; and the cinema cannot be allowed to imagine it can continue to do without it.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

PSYCHO and THE APARTMENT

OTHER HOLLYWOOD DIRECTORS have become as blatantly commercial. Others are as successful at the box-office: Wyler, for instance, Zinnemann and Minnelli. To realise what sets Hitchcock and Billy Wilder so refreshingly apart from the Big Four (or Five or Six) is to find that these two apparently disparate entertainers have in fact a surprising amount in common. Both seize cheerfully on the worst in people, coupling an attitude of settled contempt towards their audience (as towards their characters) with an infallible awareness of audience reaction. Both are notoriously and exuberantly vulgar. Indeed, to judge by *North by Northwest* and *Some Like It Hot*, they might almost be competing in the brinkmanship stakes, finding out in turn how much further each could lean over the edge of questionable taste and implausibility without actually bringing the audience out in pickets against them.

What keeps the public happy is undoubtedly their obsession with narrative craftsmanship. Your average critic, on the other hand, tends to be more concerned with the story itself than with its telling; and when, as in Hitchcock's *Psycho* (Paramount), he finds an outrageous story allied with a portentously irregular press-show and publicity, his conditioned reflexes automatically cause him to hiss and jeer.

Admittedly, there is some justification for the view that a thriller which, by its very nature, stands or falls by its action, is merely exposing its debility when it comes to depend on a complex, last-minute explication: a movie psychiatrist's explication at that. Hastily, therefore, one must affirm that *Psycho* bears about as much relation to Freud as Eva Marie Saint's high-heeled scramble down Thomas Jefferson's face does to American Central Intelligence routine; and once the tics of its amateur taxidermist have made the fact abundantly clear, then no experienced Hitchcock student has the slightest reason to expect anything other than the unreasonable. Nor, once the heroine has braved the fruit cellar, to feel exactly stunted, either. A shy young matricide who lugs his dear departed out of her grave, preserves her for ten years alongside the rest of his stuffed specimens in a swamp-bordering motel, speaking to and for her, dressing in her clothes, murdering any girl whose attraction for him might make the possessive old thing jealous, until the only way he can survive a rapidly growing burden of understandable embarrassment is by seeking total refuge in his mother's identity... Set down in cold print, the only mystery Hitchcock's solution seems unable to explain is why the critics should have even tried to believe such arrant nonsense, and what happened to their sense of humour in the first place.

There is surely plenty to laugh at. The whole second movement preceding this coda is an expert blend of Gothic wit and horror, showing a proper respect for the traditions of its *Old Dark House* and *Cat and the Canary* genre. A fair example is the tart rejoinder of the pretty victim (Janet Leigh), told by her sinister admirer (Anthony Perkins) that she eats like a bird and glancing up at a roomful of stuffed comparisons before conceding that he, after all, ought to know. A few moments later, the boy is agitatedly insisting that his mother, though hateful and probably mad, is really as harmless as his stuffed birds, and one gives Hitchcock the first of several credits for playing fair and literal with his audience. No one, for instance, could presumably be fooled by that tall, uncomfortable female figure flitting briefly across the width of a lighted upper window; nor by that Old Mother Riley voice with dialogue to match. ("So you want to shut me up in the fruit cellar, eh, boy, eh? You think I'm fruity, I suppose!")

Yet the audience is fooled, for the simple reason that there is something horribly and persistently compulsive on the other side of the coin. And it is here that Hitchcock's showmanship comes in. Having given Janet Leigh the kind of postscript star billing conven-



"Psycho": Anthony Perkins.

tionally reserved for drunk scene "guest" appearances and murder victims, and relying on word of mouth reports that *Psycho* contains one of the bloodiest murders ever filmed, he then asks this spirited actress to sustain the daylight panic of a secretary in love who has robbed her firm of \$40,000. This she does, for a full thirty minutes, through a series of false trails and encounters with a lantern-jawed cop in dark glasses so increasingly unnerving that one feels her guilt pouring down one's own brow. But it is not until the switch from first to second gear that one becomes fully aware of Hitchcock's diabolical ingenuity. There is the car ride itself, reminiscent of *Orphée* in its imperceptible shift from the everyday exhaustion of pursuit and blinding headlights to the cold, latent horror of the missed turning, dusk, rain on the windscreen and death in the vulnerable, hygienic setting of a motel shower. Inevitably, the beastliness of the murder itself comes almost as a relief, especially when followed by the symbolic, guilt-assuaging detail of mopping-up operations and the washing of blood-stained hands. But the respite is brief. With the swamp's disinclination to swallow the car and its corpse at one gurgling, the burden of panic and guilt is transferred to the candy-chewing killer, Norman Bates, watching under the branch of a withered tree. An aura of nightmare embraces the whole cast. An innocent-seeming old lady in a hardware store is heard asking for painless insecticide; hayforks form a menacing, serpentine crown round the head of the dead girl's sister.

For all the fake intimacy of the opening love scene and the manifest absurdity of the dénouement, *Psycho* comes nearer to attaining an exhilarating balance between content and style than anything Hitchcock has done in years. Of course, it is a very minor work. But its virtues of tension, surprise, virtuosity and control are all major ones. The unacademic chop and change of George Tomasini's editing and John L. Russell's camerawork is effectively unsettling, notably in the second murder sequence; the strange bond that seems to unite Bates with the birds which obsess him is conveyed by feral, blood-curdling shrieks on the sound-track each time he strikes (not to mention that low-angle, beak-like close-up of his under-jaw at one point); one notes the subliminal, momentary dissolve from our last sight of Bates into his mother's grinning skull, and the minatory quality of Bernard Herrmann's score. Finally, there is some excellent acting: from Martin Balsam as the tenacious private detective, John McIntyre as the sceptical local sheriff, above all from Anthony Perkins as Bates, all stammers and spasmodic charm concealing a festering and malignantly disordered mind.

Billy Wilder's *The Apartment* (United Artists), a comedy about a soft-hearted, ambitious clerk (Jack Lemmon) in a large New York insurance company who attains executive status through allowing his bosses to use his apartment for some fairly sordid affairs, is enlivened like *Psycho* by much astringent wit and impudence; the general level of craftsmanship, too, is not permitted to fall. Unfortunately it shares with *Psycho* an unacceptable basic premise, far more damaging in a film with pretensions to satire, namely that a

number of highly paid executives should be so frantically dependent on the use of what is really rather a depressing little flat. It must also be admitted that Wilder is less successful than Hitchcock in accommodating his style to an equal number of switches in mood. Jack Lemmon's feverish attempts to keep his appointments book straight verge on the grotesque; the middle section, in which the heroine (Shirley MacLaine) attempts suicide for love of a married man, is taken at a deliberate pace calling for a penetration in the writing which it simply does not get; while the mordant ruthlessness of the asides at the expense of big business intrigues, indiscretions and Christmas parties is compromised by a final sequence of quite awful sentimentality.

Actually it would be unfair to use *Psycho* as a stick with which to beat *The Apartment*. Hitchcock is not a serious director (except in his worst films), whereas Wilder, here trying to say something hard, tough, ironical and yet commercially palatable about lovers, pimps and the struggle for success, is running the old familiar risk of brilliance without depth. What, after all, ultimately brings these two films and their directors together is the triumphant way in which they never relax their grip on one's attention. In a season offering new and generally lifeless entertainments by Milestone, Minnelli, Donen and Quine, this is something to be almost pathetically grateful for. Which is not to say that one altogether absolves Hitchcock and Wilder from the charge of flippancy. Merely that one prefers to forego any strictures on that score until such time as the rest of Hollywood can produce anything even remotely approximating to the old arch-fiends' sleight-of-hand.

PETER JOHN DYER

ROSES FOR THE PROSECUTOR

TIMES ARE CHANGING. The Captain of Köpenick had to steal a magnificent comic opera uniform to get the better of authority; Rosemarie Nitribitt managed it with a tape-recorder. All that the picaresque pedlar-hero of Wolfgang Staudte's *Roses for the Prosecutor* (Gala) needs to dispatch the public prosecutor, a safely entrenched West German bureaucrat, is a little box of *Luftwaffe*-issue chocolate—a harsh reminder of the last days of the war when he was sentenced to death by the same prosecutor for filching the same brand of chocolate. He survived, eventually to come face to face with his old enemy in an involuntary, almost farcically uneven battle ending with himself, ex-Private Kleinschmidt, the victor. Again the hero is the Little Man, played here with loose-limbed charm by Walter Giller, around whom eruptive history headily whirls while he hangs back and tries to make the best of it. And again, the whole conception sprouts from a headline (as did *The Girl Rosemarie*), a spoof, an anecdote implying a wider overall truth.

The best moments in Staudte's film come, as in *The Underdog*, when he is able to shape a scene around this sharp and stylised anecdotal conception: the prologue of the frustrated execution; the ironic portrait of the German upper-middle class way of life, self-indulgent and self-satisfied; the comic defeats of the embarrassed prosecutor, culminating in a rather Freudian trial scene; and the richly satirical performance by Martin Held, who hits right at the heart of the pompous attorney with his fat cigar, building up almost effortlessly an unnerving suggestion, bravely indicated, of the man's pursuit of his own private *lebensraum*. This is the best thing in the film.

But a good anecdote, like a proverb, should be terse; and this West German film, while providing further evidence of a renaissance of sorts, is apparently still not mature enough to condense something cloudy and generalised into a microcosm or, alternatively, to sketch in tangibly a broad social canvas. Instead one gets the feeling of a pretty conventional kind of liberalism, laden with sub- (and sub-sub-) plots and the sort of surface visual effects one has always associated with the German cinema. Thus, following the sudden sound of unexplained music, one can be sure that the camera will straight away swoop down to reveal the radio from which it has to come; or a *motif* in the first reel, like the chocolate, has to have its echo in the last reel; and so on. It is rather like a liquid—and a thickly brewed one at that—which one can never quite grasp.

A "courageous" film? Up to a point. But why can't it take the risk of suggesting occasionally, instead of explaining everything in black and white? Why can't it dare to leave its ex-Nazi unpunished? Must there always be a moral at the end of a German story? With deeper conviction and fresher pictorial accents it might, perhaps, have been courageous. As it stands, it never quite lives up to its own intended irony. But the fact remains that the film has been made,

and made in Germany; and that if Germans try to speak honestly about Germany, or Russians about Russia—defeated conquerors of the past and aspiring ones of the future—we, the "mutes and audience to this act", must listen very carefully and content ourselves with half-truths: which is the greatest irony of all.

ROBERT VAS

In Brief

THE CRIMINAL (*Anglo Amalgamated*). For a director concerned with social problems, the "gangster" film still offers the most commercially viable outlet. Previously the melodramatic subject of *Time Without Pity* allowed Joseph Losey to touch on the question of the death penalty. Here the director and his script-writer Alun Owen were offered a story-line which, although not in every respect satisfactory, allowed them to paint as realistic and uncompromising a picture of English underworld and prison life as we have seen. The film suffers from the fact that the story had to be told in ninety minutes. As a result, time has not been found to go deeply enough into the character of the protagonist, an old-fashioned professional hold-up man who six weeks after his release from prison pulls off a £40,000 race-track job, only to be caught and re-imprisoned a few hours later. A more serious handicap is the imperfectly realised relationship between Banion (Stanley Baker) and the girl (Margit Saad) for whom he loses both his £40,000 and his life.

Although the film is called *The Criminal*, its most remarkable characterisation is that of the prison warder, played with controlled viciousness by Patrick Magee. As in a Genêt novel, the demarcation between prisoner and warder is ambiguous. The warder is the key figure of prison life, acting as a buffer between the governor, enlightened but totally unaware, and the prisoners, over whom the warder rules only by accepting their code, their morality and their way of life. One prisoner is played off against another; the power of the "kings" of the cell-blocks is unchallenged; and it is even suggested that the warder connives at Banion's escape. In fact, one imagines Losey to be saying that there is no real moral difference between warder and prisoner.

But he does not preach a sermon, nor does he draw a diagram. With his talent for the frenetic sequence, and his power to evoke the violence which is an integral part of these men's life, he brilliantly re-creates the prison world. The most powerful sequence occurs soon after the beginning: a prisoner has somehow infringed the code by which these men live, and Banion arranges a squaring of accounts. In order to cover up the noise, the word goes through Block B to make as much of a racket as possible. One of the men quietly starts to tap out "Nick, nack, paddy whack". The rhythm is quickly taken up on pots and pans, bars and doors, by the other cells until the noise rises to a great roar of singing, shouting and banging. The contrast between the noise and the systematic, almost unemotional way in which the prisoners begin is made more terrifying by their subsequent warming-up into a ritual of noise expressing their savage joy both in the meting out of justice and in their childlike gesture of rebellion. A terrified young warder rushes back and forth in an attempt to quell the riot; but Burroughs, the chief warder, dismisses him with a sardonic smile. And as Burroughs walks away, he begins to clank his keys against the iron railings. With a look of frustrated complicity he joins in the tribal drummings. Victim and murderer, keeper and kept, judge and judged are seen in all their ambivalent oneness.

Ever since Losey left America ten years ago, his early admirers have been waiting for him to fulfil his first promise. Most of his English films have had uncongenial subjects, of course, but the success of *The Criminal* is not just due to Losey's having found—or been offered—a subject which suits his particular temperament. Somehow, in the years when one imagined Losey to be marking time with films like *The Sleeping Tiger* and *The Gypsy and the Gentleman*, he was growing ever more skilful: not a shot is wasted, his control over his material, his actors, and his visuals is more rigorous and more strikingly personal than before. In *The Criminal* he has at last fought his way to the top.

RICHARD ROUD

PRIVATE PROPERTY (*Cross-Channel*), a low budget American production which has been refused a certificate by the British censor, is a deliberate attempt to challenge the run-of-the-mill commercial film on its own ground. The makers seem to have made up their minds to show that they can produce a cheap film on their own

terms, from a youthfully sophisticated point of view, without ceasing to be entertaining. The director, Leslie Stevens, is a successful playwright and scriptwriter; the cameraman, Ted McCord, has a long and distinguished background in Hollywood; the leading actor, Corey Allen, played opposite James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause*.

The film's professionalism is best seen in the shooting, where the restriction of the locations is used to splendid advantage to create a feeling of isolation in the midst of a rich suburb, the lethargy of summer heat, luxury and idleness. Equally canny is the way in which the subject turns the lack of conventionally exciting movement to good use. The story begins from a slightly self-conscious premise—two young men, layabouts, beat, playing it all cool, break into an empty house next door to an expensively laid-out residence. A beautiful girl lives there, sunbathing the days away while her husband works on his engineering projects. The aim of the two men, Duke and Boots, is seduction—seduction by proxy. Duke, the bolder and more attractive of the two, will bring the girl to the point of capitulation and then hand her over to Boots.

It is during the first half that the film shows most character—in the contrast between the superficially idyllic life of the young married couple, rich, well set-up and secure, and the drifting of the two youths. The irony of the conventional "getting to know you" scene when played with rape instead of orange blossom in mind, the soupy music behind the inattentive husband going over his blueprints with his pretty and bored wife—all these show a healthy detachment from the woman's magazine world of the glossier American film. When the film tries to lose its cynical objectivity and begins to pass judgment, however, a much too easy slickness creeps over the writing and acting. The process of ingratiation has been carried to a point where the girl, fuddled and feverish one afternoon when her husband is out of town, is taken by Duke to the deserted house and handed over to Boots. Then, in a fit of revulsion, Duke retreats to the girl's house. He mistakes her cries of fear for the sound of rape. When she staggers back untouched (Boots is impotent), Duke tries to kill her. Boots intervenes with his flick knife, and a three-cornered fight develops at the end of which Boots is sinking in a pool of his own blood to the floor of the swimming pool. The husband returns, like the Mounties, just in the nick of time. A pistol is produced. The girl pulls the trigger. The Duke is shot dead.

The film exits on a much lower level than it enters. The climactic scenes are frankly sensational, the most important speech of all, in which Duke accuses the girl of having enjoyed her rape, is inaudible for most of its length, and none of the characters is explained. The husband, in particular, is drawn with almost farcical crudeness. But the good thing about *Private Property* is that there is no attempt to pretend otherwise. The end, however melodramatic, works. Director, cameraman and actors have set out to prove a point, and they have succeeded. They have the talent to attempt something of a finer grain. Their problem now is to bring in the added perception, judgment and self-control.—KENNETH CAVANDER

LET'S MAKE LOVE (Fox) more or less epitomises the Hollywood of 1960. It has an international cast, with two leading performances of dazzling charm and professionalism; production values which stop only just short of ostentation; a director, George Cukor, who probably knows as much as anyone about how to put an entertainment film together; and a script, by Norman Krasna and Hal Kanter, which wanders distractedly from point to point, taking chances to be funny or tender or satirical on the way but allowing waste spaces of inertia to pile up. A few years ago, one feels, the structure would have been altogether tighter and surer. A few years ago, though, *Let's Make Love* would not have been required to run two hours.

The story is one of the oldest of them all: Prince Charming on his knees before a Cinderella who doesn't appreciate an industrial empire but is perfectly satisfied with spaghetti at a cheap café and evening classes and a leading part in a struggling off-Broadway revue. The industrialist must win on her terms, which leads him to hire Milton Berle, Bing Crosby and Gene Kelly as instructors. He can't openly present a bracelet from Cartiers, so he has nervously to pass it off as a piece of junk jewellery. And he is not, of course, to be reproached for his riches: the very rich are not different from you and me. Yves Montand's millionaire, straining to repress the arrogance of power, and Marilyn Monroe's actress, with her shapeless knitting, her geography text-books and her rich and absolute delight in being herself, achieve that rather special brand of near-realism which thoroughly likeable acting can impose on paper-thin but not unsympathetic writing.

Cukor's old skill is evident in the bits of business he finds for his actors, the touches which build up sympathy, the unobtrusively



"The Criminal": a location scene on Wimbledon Common, as the gang meet to plan the hold-up.

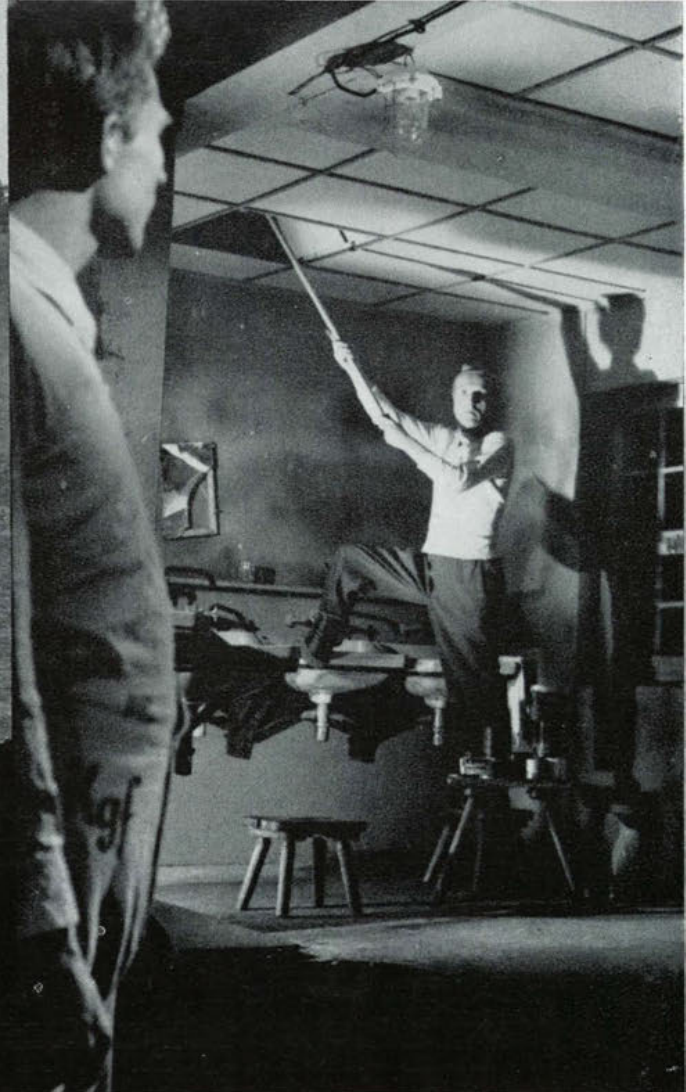
accurate sense of where to place the camera and how to keep a flow of backstage action and dialogue moving. The best of *Let's Make Love* has the relaxed and easy look only achieved through a careful attention to detail. The oddest episode is that in which Milton Berle despairingly tries to make a comedian out of Yves Montand, and the clichés of popular humour are one by one exhumed. This is funny and astringent and a little sad: a comment on humour in a film which also tells us—of jokes—that "new is easy; funny isn't."—PENELOPE HOUSTON

BULLFIGHT (Gala) was made in France nine years ago, a compilation film directed by Pierre Braunberger and originally titled *La Course des Taureaux*. Presumably the prejudices against the subject explain its belated arrival in this country. An encyclopaedic amount of sheer visual information has been assembled, including filmed accounts of bullfighting (from Lumière in the 1890s to the 1950s) as well as shots of the breeding and selection of bulls and the training of matadors. Diagrams and slow motion sequences illuminate each stage of the ritual, and the film is frozen arrestingly into stills at the moments of greatest danger and skill. But, information aside, such a subject has obvious dramatic possibilities. From a sample *corrida* we cut away constantly to parallel sequences showing the greatest masters of the arena. This editing technique produces a timeless amalgamation of all that is most memorable in the art, and gives a telescoped emotional effect of past and present, not unlike the editing of *Hiroshima mon Amour*.

For the most part the camera is content to report, and indeed gives us everything from the bull's whirling view of the ring to close-ups of the rangy Manolete with his limpid, graceful technique. But there are candid moments (the matador praying before he goes in while a prosperous manager puffs awkwardly at a cigarette) and lyrical ones from time to time (the high-angle crowd shot with a predominance of white fans, like accordion-pleated water lilies open to the sun). The film is punctuated by a minimum of calm, efficient commentary (spoken by Bryant Haliday) and set against a background of exciting *pasodobles*, often used to subtle and disquieting effect.

It would be hard to overpraise *Bullfight* for its spacing out of information with excitement and for its fabulously detailed rummaging among the archives of bullfighting. And if there seems to be a slight squeamishness about actual death in the ring (either of matador or bull), censorship is probably at fault.

PHILLIP RILEY



THE POLISH DRAMA

BOLESŁAW MICHAŁEK

Later this autumn, the National Film Theatre will be presenting a season of new Polish films. It is now several years since the Polish cinema made its first impact on the West with films such as *A Generation* and *Kanal*, and in this article our Polish correspondent discusses developments in the situation of his country's cinema.

THE POLISH CINEMA of 1960 has reached a kind of artistic watershed, a situation whose particular interest lies in what it may indicate for the future. On the one hand, the reverberations set up by the explosion of 1955-58 have not yet entirely died away; on the other, one has become conscious of explorations, however tentative they may be at this stage, in the direction of new formulae, new ideas, new methods of expression. This year looks like something of a turning point; but to see what the change of direction means one ought first to look back a few years.

OF THE MANY, and often thoroughly contradictory, opinions voiced about the Polish cinema between 1955 and 1958, one seems particularly just: Polish film-makers had managed to establish contact with the psychological realities of their own time. It was this sense of contact, this repeated stabbing at the most sensitive areas of the national consciousness, which enabled the film-makers so immediately to win the support of the Polish public, which had previously shown itself as somewhat sceptical about the national product. Paradoxically, however, the films achieved this impact not through their concern with contemporary issues but rather through reviving memories of the struggles of the Occupation period and the first days of peace. In such a territory complexes flourished;

A world of expendable heroes. Left: the Polish cavalry charges the German tanks in Wajda's "Lotna". Above: prisoners of war in a scene from Munk's "Eroica".

and they found expression on the screen through repeated explorations of a single tragic situation: the inability of the individual to discover a place for himself in his own national community.

In this way the Polish film penetrated a sphere already very familiar in Poland's literature, whose most durable attitudes have always been linked with what is sometimes called "the Polish drama". Nineteenth-century Polish romanticism was packed with it. Unlike the traditional European romantic drama, in which the individual is swept along by currents of love and hate, Polish romantics (and this remains true of the twentieth century) have always found their themes in a drama of national destiny of which the individual story is only an illustration. From the end of the nineteenth century, European literature as a whole has been more or less dominated by descriptive realism or psychological introspection; but in Poland works of this kind have remained marginal to the main literary stream, and on the whole passionless and uninflectional. It has been impossible to escape from the "Polish drama".

In turn this drama became the very essence of the new artistic movement in the cinema. The perspectives the screen could offer, its methods of presenting social issues, inevitably carried only a limited intellectual weight. But the important thing was the emotional charge the films generated—at least for a Polish public. The force of films like *A Generation* or *Kanal*, for instance, had little to do with their psychological overtones, their accuracy of observation or their intellectual power. Rather, it lay in the actual dramatic conception of the films' expendable heroes and fated victims. Another, even more striking, example is Wajda's *Ashes and Diamonds*.

Here a man, honest according to his own lights, is thrust into a hurly-burly of incomprehensible happenings, driven to become a killer, given no chance of finding a place among his own kind. Munk's *Eroica* works an ironical reversal of the same theme through its story of a hero *malgré lui*—a man stripped of all the traditional attributes of heroism who yet becomes, in his own way, a hero in a doomed national cause.

The whole group of young film-makers which has dominated Polish production since 1955 has in effect been pre-occupied with this theme—one offering opportunities for the perpetuation of legends as well as the reopening of old wounds. The styles vary: from Wajda's savage vitality and baroque overtones to Stanislaw Różewicz' semi-documentary reconstructions (*Free City*); from Wojciech Has' melancholy search for refinements of atmosphere (*Farewells*) to Munk's irony and Kutz' mannered realism (*Cross of Valour*). However individual the sensibilities, though, the impulse has remained the same; and it has given the Polish cinema of recent years much of its strength.

But today there seems to be little left of this explosive impulse, beyond a few faint and final echoes. Take Wajda's *Lotna*, for instance, with its variation on the familiar theme. Again, this time in the setting of the 1939 campaign, we have the *motif* of tragic, hopeless, futile heroism, with a cavalry detachment (already an anachronism in itself) advancing to inevitable defeat through a forest of misty uncertainties. In the sequence of the cavalry attack on the German armoured cars, the film's idea finds its firmest expression. Like all works marking the end of a cycle, however, *Lotna* is a superficial rather than a considered film.

There is even a significant ambiguity in Wajda's description of the heroic action. Is the fate of the detachment presented with admiration, or is there a certain element of mistrust of its hopeless heroism? It is true that Wajda sometimes likes to express himself equivocally. This time, however, the result is not (as in *Ashes and Diamonds*) an impression of the director's determination to give contradictory values the same weight and objectivity of expression. Rather, one is left feeling that he has simply not gone far enough into his subject. He has limited himself to the external gesture, the surface drama, and has presented it moreover with all the help he can get from symbols familiar in patriotic art of the last century: the eagle in flames, the pilgrim's staff, the weeping willows and blood-stained sabres. These too clearly indicate the facile eloquence and mechanics of *Lotna*.

The last few months have given us several other echoes of the "big subject": films such as Jerzy Zarzycki's *White Bear*—the story of a Polish Jew who during the Occupation concealed himself literally in a bear skin—and Witold Lesiewicz' *Year One*, an *Ashes and Diamonds* subject handled without Wajda's force. A third film demands more detailed discussion.

This is *Bad Luck* (or, more literally, *Cross Eyed Luck*), which Andrzej Munk directed from a script by Jerzy Stawinski, writer also of *Kanal* and *Eroica*. The film was shown at Cannes, where it aroused only limited interest. In its national context, however, its importance is considerable, in that it seems effectively to bring this whole cycle to a kind of logical conclusion.

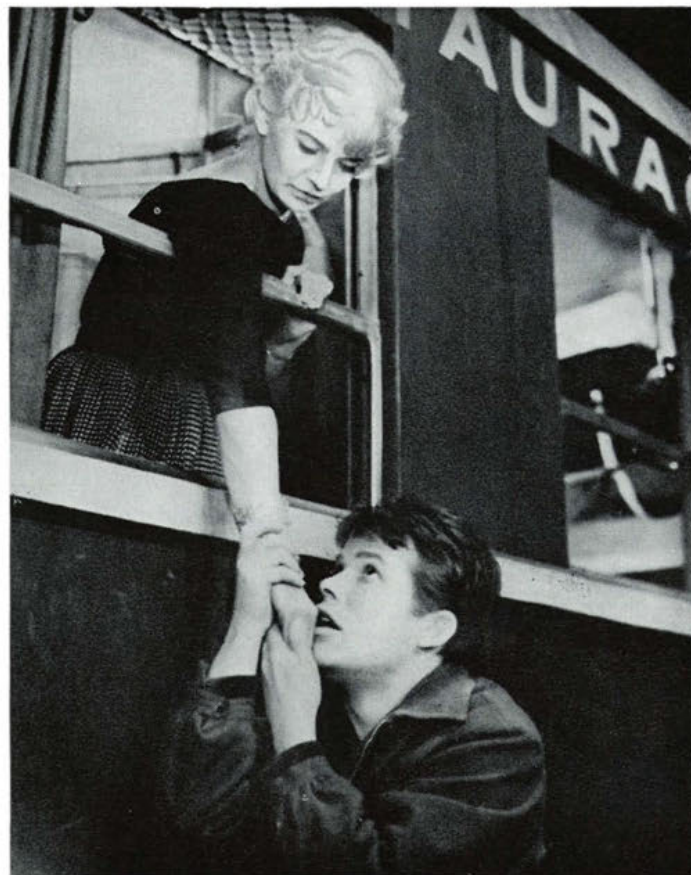
Bad Luck is the story of a humble little man, resolutely ordinary, who is apparently the victim of misfortune. But is it really misfortune? In 1939, for instance, on the outbreak of war, the hero, Piszczyk, realises that his correct role in life is now that of war hero. Resolute in his determination, overcoming repeated obstacles, he endeavours to rejoin his regiment. But he finds the barracks empty and deserted, with nothing in sight but an abandoned officer's tunic. He barely has time to put it on, to give a single triumphant glance at his reflection in a mirror, before the Germans arrive to take him prisoner. This episode sums up the whole idea of the film.

Here once again is the drama of a man anxious to fit himself into the pattern of national life yet continually baulked, for all his blindly enthusiastic acceptance of the ideas, tastes and fashions of each epoch. The ridiculous misfortunes which befall Piszczyk are thus the consequence of two paradoxical factors: the fatal, antagonistic force of history and the conformist instinct of the hero. The film's authors would like to show that his resolute conformism is one of the main reasons for Piszczyk's defeats. But we know, all too well, that in most modern societies conformism has its advantages; that it is the conformists, not the courageous rebels, who are likely to get on in life. Is *Bad Luck*, when it comes down to it, really concerned with a brand of conformism which is half-hearted, or simply stupid?

The film has set itself a problem in construction. Repeatedly, in a series of different historical contexts, its hero is confronted with the same situation; and Munk, accepting this, has tried to vary his presentation by treating each episode in a different style—moving from the silent film parody of the opening to farce, then to realistic comedy, and so on. Inevitably, the result remains something of a muddle. But, whatever one thinks of its achievement, there is no overlooking the film's peculiar significance: four years ago its hero's dilemma would have been treated with stern seriousness, whereas today he has become subject to what one might almost describe as the Offenbach treatment. Even the fatal forces of history can now be lightly mocked. This is a remarkably swift transition; and one is left pondering why a whole powerful impulse has apparently lost much of its force. It is a fundamental question, implying as it does the reasons for all manner of current developments.

2

Politically and economically, the recent stabilisation has noticeably weakened the old national complexes and the resentments which led to this bedevilling concept of Polish history, with its heroes everlastingly beset by catastrophe.



"Night Train": Lucyna Winnicka, Zbigniew Cybulski.

There seems not much doubt that the Polish public has itself become a little weary of these themes, perhaps because of a belief that life itself has now left them behind. At any rate, issues which in 1956 would have had tremendous impact now pass almost unnoticed. All this, inevitably, has brought the Polish cinema to a moment of hesitancy, doubt, experiment. A number of new tendencies can be detected, but there is nothing comparable to the common denominator of a few years ago.

To begin with, there is quite a marked reaction against films of "national drama". This is apparent, for instance, in Jerzy Kawalerowicz' recent *Night Train*, where the theme is not something specifically Polish but is rather a general study in sentimental confusion. The big gestures and feverish tone have been replaced by a formal elegance and precision; the drama of national conscience by a series of minor everyday crises. Full of technical virtuosity, the narrative confines itself to a few hours of travel in a couple of railway coaches without seeming in any way cramped by this restriction of space. Scenes are played in deep focus, along the length of a sleeping-car; there is a counterpoint between the moving countryside seen through the train windows and the static scenes within the coaches; and a continual sense of contrast between the vast, open landscape and the stuffy, crowded interiors. The atmosphere is one of intangible yet intense expectancy, culminating in the pursuit of a killer and the aftermath of exhaustion, shame and disgust. The passengers all seem to experience a kind of emotional thirst which they are unable to satisfy. And the journey finally takes on a metaphorical meaning, implying the current of life itself with its deceptions and delays and sentimental problems. But for all its careful construction, the film ultimately strikes one as hollow, with a rather novelettish fiction at its centre in place of a serious character study. This is in complete contrast to the films we have been talking about: crammed with filmic weaknesses, they always had a burning problem at the core.

Wojciech Has' *One Room*, however apparently remote from *Night Train*, shares certain characteristics with it. Again, its concern is with shades of feeling, little conflicts, the accumulation of atmospheric detail, rather than with the big dramatic issue. Its source is Unilowski's realistic, "shocking" novel of 1930; and in adapting it Has has taken the opportunity to sketch in a study of an enclosed world. Its characters are artists (or sham artists); its crises those of hysteria and misunderstanding, delight and despair, true feeling and the nuances of self-deception.

Another sign of the transition from the burning contemporary theme is perhaps to be found in the veteran Aleksander

Ford's latest work, a big period reconstruction called *The Teutonic Knights*. This is very much a film for an occasion, in fact made to commemorate the 550th anniversary of the Battle of Grünwald; and we all know how this kind of big spectacle can go disastrously wrong. In this case, however, apart from its vigorous handling, the film offers evidence of the visual taste and sensibility of its director, not to mention a sheer narrative power culled from Sienkiewicz' novel. There are some striking colour effects, especially in the interiors; the Battle of Grünwald itself has been realised with great dash; and there are one or two lyrical episodes reminiscent almost of Dovzhenko. The spectacle, it should be added, is genuinely spectacular.

3

Elegant aestheticism on the one hand; Ford's monumental battle piece on the other. But this is not all. There is a third tendency, and a significant one, to be found in the attempts of several young film-makers to come to grips with contemporary questions. Though none of these five or six films has been more than partially successful, each has at least some point of interest.

First of three recent examples, *We'll Meet on Sunday* is a new film by Stanislaw Lenartowicz, who five years ago made a promising *avant-garde* picture called *Winter Twilight*. Lenartowicz has tried to outline a portrait, at once psychological and social, of a Polish town as seen through the eyes of two soldiers who visit it each Sunday on weekend leave and wander, rather bored, from one end of it to the other. Numerous characters and sketches, a whole album of little dramas pasted together—Lenartowicz is continually changing the subject, always bringing in new people only to drop them again. If the film, rather reminiscent in formula of Rossellini, doesn't wholly come off, this is because many of the episodes lack the indispensable flavour of authenticity; the observation isn't quite intense enough to make up for the absence of a well-told story.

Another, somewhat similar, film is *Sleep-Walkers* by Bohdan Poreba, previously a documentary director. This deals with Polish Teddy boys. The starting point is almost documentary; and, indeed, a sociologist collaborated on the script. But this has not saved the plot from elements of rather tawdry melodrama, while the director, having begun to penetrate the lives of his Teddy boys, has fallen into a common trap. He starts to look for the picturesque and the surprising and finds himself losing contact with the real.

Finally, *A Place in the World*, by another young director, Stanislaw Rózewicz, whose *Free City* has already had a certain success abroad. This is the story of a neglected child, searching doggedly for companionship and sympathy; a little like *Les Quatre Cents Coups*, although both its atmosphere and treatment of character stamp it unmistakably as belonging to the Poland of 1960. The film ends happily, with an optimism which may seem a bit naïve and old-fashioned but which is still honestly moving. The fault lies elsewhere; there's a shortage of driving force and spontaneity, and the temperature stays low.

Which of these tendencies will go the furthest in bringing about the definitive collapse of the "national drama" and in indicating a new direction? Not the historical film like *Teutonic Knights*, a work with an interest of its own but without perspective; which leaves us with the aesthetic film—elegant, inoffensive and Europeanised—on the one hand, and that hazardous thing the social film on the other. The final choice is not a matter depending solely on the talent and temperament of the film-makers; above all it must make a claim on their sense of responsibility.

"A Place in the World".



Television Commentary



COMMERCIAL VALUES

MANY OF BRITAIN'S most noted directors and technicians—including several from the Free Cinema school—are currently being offered every inducement to look at the contemporary domestic scene. Those who accept are given elastic, often almost unlimited budgets, and are frequently urged to shoot the principal action on street corners, in back gardens, outside garages and on similar everyday locations. Their subjects include problems of work and leisure, the sense of community and social awareness. Many of their films consider principles of good neighbourliness, stresses in marital relations, the upbringing of children and solutions to urban loneliness. Nor are new developments in technique overlooked. The encouragement given to experiments in cartoon work, for instance, has already revitalised the animated section of the industry.

These little films have become an inescapable part of television fare. But even the sceptic who doubts that Oxo gives a meal man appeal, or that you're never alone with a Strand, is unlikely to have realised the talents—and the budgets—behind the commercials. The portrait of the British as a glib, immaculate army of consumers who only interrupt a locust-like devotion to food and drink in order to goggle at demonstrations of the latest expendable, is in fact supplied by past and present white hopes of the cinema.

The individuality of the neurotics in the Horlicks series, or of the Kellogg's Cornflake eaters, is respectively due to Alexander Mackendrick and Karel Reisz. Other directors whose work in commercials has gone uncredited include Lindsay Anderson (Rowntrees Fruit Gums), Terry Bishop (Maltesers), Don Chaffey (Rowntrees), Paul Dickson (Tuf Shoes), Guy Hamilton (Black Magic), John Krish (Cheese Bureau), Joseph Losey (Walls Raspberry Split), Leslie Norman (Esso Extra), Wolf Rilla (Horlicks), Wendy Toye (Mackeson) and Peter Zadek (Bourne and Hollingsworth).

Cameramen who have been engaged on commercials include Jack Cardiff and Desmond Dickinson, Frederick Young and Walter Lassally, while the latest trend is towards the employment of top art directors and stage designers. The directors Jack Lee (P.G. Tea), Clive Donner (Heinz Baked Beans) and Pat Jackson (Surf) have had the enterprise to form their own company, Augusta. And Leon Clore, the producer, has just set up another new company, Film Contracts, which will concentrate on commercials and which has Karel Reisz and Anthony Simmons on its board. It seems scarcely surprising, in

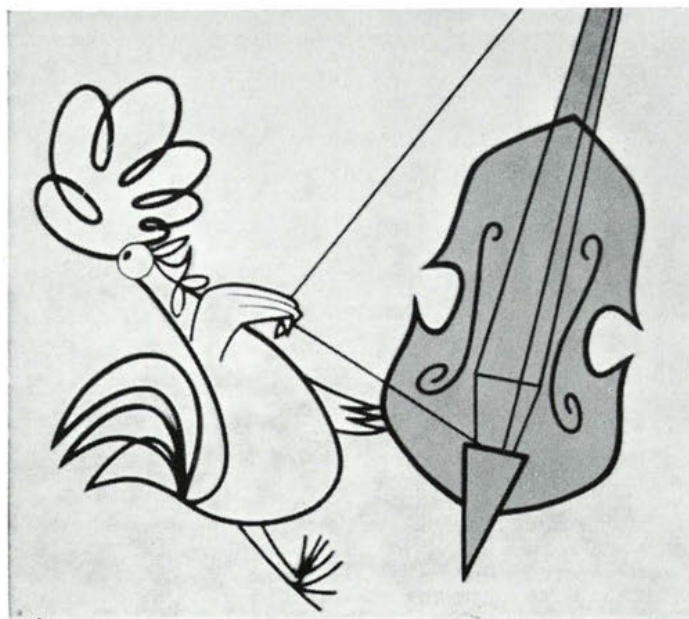
the circumstances, that one has heard one feature director refer to the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency as "the club".

When film units flew to the Jungfrau and the Riviera on behalf of Gibbs S.R. Toothpaste, such expeditions were almost unique. But today sunshine may be ensured for a fifteen second beach scene by shooting in Tangier, and weeks or even months may be spent shooting a complete series of commercials in Corsica or Majorca. For the recent 150-second commercial announcing Players' sixty-year jubilee, Peter Bayliss, producer of the *Scrap Book* film series, was brought from Paris to direct. The production involved weeks of research, reviewing thousands of feet of film, and was organised by Associated British-Pathé.

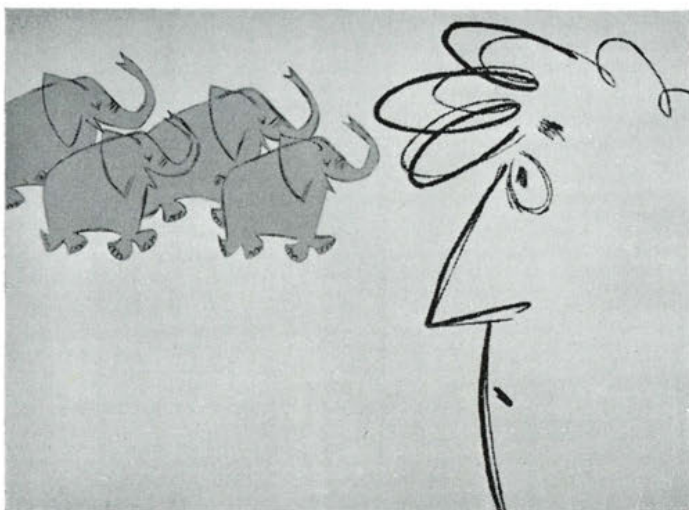
Many film studios can be hired for commercials when, as is increasingly apt to occur, they're not occupied with features. A stage at M-G-M costs around £500 a day, complete with about forty technicians but excluding director, artists and lighting cameraman. One stage at M-G-M was recently filled with the Hong Kong waterfront for *The World of Suzie Wong*. Another, of the same size, was taken over for a 15-second coffee commercial. The facilities and crews offered to both productions were much the same.

Some film production companies have found commercials ten or twenty times more profitable than documentaries. "With commercials they can make in a week what would otherwise take three months," a technician told me. Anglo-Scottish Pictures, which was formed in 1945 to produce shorts and documentaries, jogged along happily for several years before turning to cinema advertising shorts. With the advent of commercial television came what a representative modestly described as "enormous expansion". The number of camera crews has trebled; far more freelances are employed; and shortage of studio space prompted the building of Halliford Studios for the express purpose of shooting commercials.

New companies have also flourished. Biographic Cartoon Films, launched as a two-man concern in a single basement room in Tufnell Park, took over a five-floor Soho building within three years and is now as active in live-action production as in cartoon work. It is only in the cartoon field that there have been signs of new talents using the profits from commercials to finance more ambitious productions. Biographic actually divert a percentage of their profits into the "Biographic Experimental Film Fund", which already has the production of *Polygamous Polonius* to its credit. And *The Little Island* was largely financed by Dick Williams' earnings as an animator on such commercials as Sun-Bleed Bread.



One of the cartoon commercials made by Biographic for Shippam's Paste.



Another commercial by Biographic—for Glenryck Pilchards.

"Today most of the directors who work on commercials will have their own artist's agent," a director told me. "Their agents will get them work on feature films and/or commercials, but they don't find ten per cent. of anything else is worth their while. Fees are a matter of contract agreements, of course, but a director might expect 150 guineas for a 30-second commercial. And the technicians are always on full feature rates." A director who was offered a commercial which he didn't want to direct asked for £1,000 for the single day's work involved. He was given it—and handed the cheque over to charity.

A few weeks ago, an article in *Television Mail* noted that it "was no longer unusual for a prestige commercial to have a budget which, *pro rata*, was higher than for a first feature film." Budgets for commercials necessarily vary enormously, depending on the subject, treatment, artists, sets, locations, opticals and the amount of original music required. But the average cost of a 60-second production can be put at something between £600 and £1,000. Cartoons are considerably more expensive, ranging between about £1,200 and £1,500 for a one-minute commercial. And it is certainly not unheard of for a 60-second production, live action or cartoon, to cost £2,000 or more.

The contrast between the amount spent on commercials and on programmes is a little startling. Associated-Rediffusion's prestige news series, *This Week*, operates on a weekly budget of about £1,000 to £1,200, a figure probably rather above the average for most companies' half-hour features. Yet this is quite a normal budget for a commercial lasting sixty seconds. The most expensive programme ever presented on British television—the same company's notorious *An Arabian Night*—cost less per minute than the cheapest 60-second commercial. Minute for minute, in fact, the budget for a commercial can be anything from ten to three hundred times as much as that for a programme.

Rumours of sixty and seventy per cent. profit margins are not uncommon. And there are some stories of wasted money worthy even of Hollywood's more exuberant days. One popular anecdote concerns a £5,000 set featuring an orchard with hundreds of apples carefully tied on by hand—an immensely effective background to the jingle singers, but never seen on the screen. The finished commercial, as it turned out, showed only close-ups of their faces.

Production budget and agency charges may be dwarfed by the cost of buying time to get the commercial on the screen. Last year £58 million was spent in booking time; this year, according to the managing director of the Television Press Agency, "£80 million is not too much to expect." The new autumn rates mean that an advertiser booking time on the ABC Network between 7.35 and 11 on a Sunday evening now pays £3,360 for his sixty seconds. Thus a one-minute prestige commercial shown at a peak period may be as expensive, ultimately, as half-a-dozen hour-long programmes. *Pro rata*, it may cost more than one of Rank's half-million blockbusters such as *North West Frontier* or *Ferry to Hong Kong*...

Few commercials look as blatantly expensive as the films whose budgets they challenge. And although Strand recently followed Murraymints in issuing a disc of the music for their "lonely man" series, the initial popularity of the commercials seems to have dwindled as swiftly as their first curiosity value (except, perhaps, with critics who still believe in treatment transcending subject). But even those who still like to insist that the commercials are the best things on ITV may wonder whether their extravagance with talent, money and resources should be heading towards *Ben-Hur* proportions.

DEREK HILL

Book Reviews

KINO, a History of the Russian and Soviet Film. By Jay Leyda. Illustrated. (Allen and Unwin, 42s.)

HERE IS A BOOK for which there is a real need. It is of value not only to addicts of cinema but to anyone interested in a sidelight on the operations of a "people's democracy". For the lay public, however, the book has, in my opinion, two drawbacks: it needs both cutting and some rearrangement. Mr. Leyda calls it "the painful whittling process".

Mr. Leyda, an American film historian and Eisenstein's translator, is otherwise well-equipped for the job. He studied in Eisenstein's

course on film direction from 1933 to 1936 and during his stay in the Soviet Union saw all the new films and many revivals; he has kept in close touch since. It would be interesting to compare his work with a Soviet study of the same subject: so many films and personalities are regarded differently inside and outside the country—as differently, say, as Roosevelt is regarded in the U.S.A. and in Europe today.

Russian cinema is a giant that has spent most of its life bound hand and foot, and gagged except at feeding times. The result has been an unconscionable proportion of dull footage which really does not deserve the attention Mr. Leyda gives it. And since he is not a practised writer, his lack of fluency makes it difficult for him to talk of dullness without himself becoming boring.

This is a pity, for without special pleading this book becomes a demonstration in favour of the free cinema. It shows the indignities to which the artist is subjected when he no longer sees eye to eye with the current boss of the industry. In a "people's democracy" there is apparently no appeal from the decision of the man in charge, unless you can rouse enough opposition to his opinions to disturb the Central Committee of the Party. And then you risk being marked as a trouble-maker and saddled with an equally uncongenial boss as a replacement. To live in a "people's democracy" is eternally to put up with the kind of restrictions that we of the West have had to stomach in wartime. So the run-of-the-mill film-makers tend to become as civil servants, and the genuine artists glorify the revolution, the war effort and the conforming classics, or look for

another career. There can be no nonconformism and few surprises, except in flashes of inspiration shining through the political discipline.

In his introduction Mr. Leyda refers to the "supposedly negligible Russian cinema before the Bolshevik Revolution," to justify the amount of attention he gives it. What he does is to reveal an even more negative situation under the Czars than under the Bolsheviks, a situation reminiscent of the "white telephone" era of the Italian cinema under Mussolini. But while the latter provoked the brilliant *Ossessione*, with which Luchino Visconti, inspired by Renoir, courageously introduced neo-realism before the downfall of Fascism, no outstanding artist emerged under the Czarists to challenge the morbid escapist romanticism which characterised what might be called the "purple telephone" era of Russian cinema.

Russia with her two (?) thousand cinemas did not see the cinema as anything more serious than a bourgeois distraction. In a reference to Hugh Walpole's reactions, Mr. Leyda writes: "The Russian film industry of 1916 was a more solid investment than Walpole might have assumed. There were 164 production and distribution firms; 30 of these were actively engaged in making new films. The capital investment of the entire industry amounted to 4,100,000 roubles." Surely £410,000 is not much of an investment in the film industry of an empire of nearly a hundred million people?

The book picks up interest from the beginning of the revolution and there is a good chapter on the escaping escapists, their adventures and misadventures in Berlin and Paris. From then on in Russia every move in cinema was tied to the political situation: like a trolley-bus, the industry took its energy and its general direction from the overhead wires of government policy. At first it seemed deeply satisfying that Lenin should attach so much importance to the medium; and the activity of revolution is natural grist for the movie. Moreover, until the beginning of the five-year plans in 1928, the government had time only for organising the new medium of mass communication and none for regimenting its style. This was the golden era of the Russian silent film: against so red a background, the red telephone was unobtrusive.

Mr. Leyda gives many fascinating details about the change of regime. At one point, however, he seems to contradict his own knowledge. Writing about the events of the first night of the February revolution in Petrograd, he says: "We know that the brilliant audience at the long-awaited première of Meyerhold's production of Lermontov's *Masquerade* heard the shots through the gilt and velvet of the Alexandrinsky Theatre." In her biography of Eisenstein, published in 1952, Marie Seton quotes from an article "by Maxim Straukh in the possession of Jay Leyda". The quotation runs: "on the first day of the February revolution Eisenstein walked through the fighting in the city to attend a performance of Lermontov's *Masquerade* . . . at the Imperial Alexandrinsky Theatre. The première was postponed and he found the theatre closed. It was closed for ever as an Imperial theatre; when it was reopened it was a State theatre." This is not the only fact on which these two books disagree.

Mr. Leyda provides a detailed picture of much that was only sketchy before. The outstanding qualities of Eisenstein and Pudovkin are enriched by his description of the loyalty and inspiration of their respective colleagues, Alexandrov and Döller. He tells us much more than we knew before about the newsreel fanatic Dziga Vertov, whose nonconformism, by no means political, proved too much for the politicians. There are admirable passages about the making of films by these great men and by the more outstanding among their contemporaries, often in the teeth of criticism and interference. But just as interest is at its peak (and this is where some rearrangement would have helped), chronology rudely interrupts and the immediate subject is dropped so that scraps and crumbs of less relevant information can be introduced. As a result one is tempted, say, in one's admiration for Mikhail Kalatozov's *Cranes are Flying*, to turn from the intriguing account of his early work, particularly describing the film *Salt for Svanetia*, to the further reference to that film fifteen pages later. By that time, one is concerned at his withdrawal from film direction for seven years. What can one do but consult the index in the hope of learning more? Of finding by what means he re-instated himself and came to make his most popular film.

Mr. Leyda covers the years from 1933 to 1937 with his own personal experiences in the Soviet Union; and the result is a more vivid and immediate presentation of the facts, including Eisenstein's production of the never-completed *Bezhin Meadow*, on which the author worked as an apprentice.

As the story goes on, the heavy hand of Stalin was intervening more and more in the control of the industry, nine times reorganised in twenty years. Production waned in consequence and World War II made matters worse. Germany, the Fascist enemy in 1939, became



A great Victorian: Cecil B. deMille aged five.

Germany the ally, only to become the invader in 1941. Contemporary subjects (and even a historical subject like *Alexander Nevsky*) jumped in and out of favour at a moment's notice. Active warfare against a common enemy at least provided a rewarding subject, dramatically speaking. But later the megalomania of Stalin made a mockery of subjects like Stalingrad and the fall of Berlin. Censorship throttled output until in 1953 only five story films out of the dozens planned penetrated to the public screens.

The book virtually ends in 1948, with the death of Eisenstein of a broken heart. A postscript to 1958 indicates signs of the situation at that date, an apparently easier intellectual climate in which a sense of proportion, which is to say humour, and a hint of criticism of the establishment had been allowed.

Echoing the thoroughness of the research is a useful appendix giving details of the more important films made since studio production began in 1907. Mr. Leyda is to be congratulated on his marathon work, which in English at any rate is unlikely to be superseded for many a long year. His book is a tribute to those artists of Russian cinema who have kept the film alive in conditions which seem to us in the West irksome and sometimes intolerable.

THOROLD DICKINSON

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF CECIL B. DEMILLE. Edited by Donald Hayne. Illustrated. (W. H. Allen, 35s.)

CECIL BLOUNT DEMILLE's autobiography is his last monument to himself, and it is fitting that it should be a weighty, discursive memoir in the Victorian manner; for deMille was essentially a Victorian. His films are in a direct line of descent from the theatre of David Belasco, the apogee of the nineteenth-century spectacle drama. (DeMille himself, his father and his brother all worked with "The Master" at one time or another.) And the stimulus to his work was a paradoxical duality—again wholly Victorian: the irresistible urge to succeed combined with a comforting, if preposterous, certainty in his own concept of God and the Christian code.

DeMille's entry into films demonstrated his calm confidence in success. When he set out westwards, he had already arrived at an age when most people are sufficiently sceptical of success to give up experiment. The actual story of deMille's experiment is the most stirring episode in the book. The rise from the days when *The Squaw Man* was shot in a barn, and deMille rode horseback to work carrying a lunch carefully packed by his wife, to the Czarism of the great days, has the ring of an authentic Victorian success story.

DeMille kept his code of morality intact from childhood. (The key word, which crops up often in the book, is "wholesome".) It was conditioned by such factors as deMille's own heroic childhood

fantasies (he describes a daydream of being "The Champion Driver") and incidents like the scene at the death-bed of his little sister Agnes:

Mother made each of us boys put our hands on the dead child's heart and pledge that we would never treat any woman other than we would have wanted Agnes treated, if she had lived.

His sense of a messianic role came later, of course, with the religious films, the conditions of whipped-up spirituality in which they were made, and the testimonials to their "inspirational" qualities which poured in subsequently. No wonder he came to feel rather close to God's counsels, and to speak of His designs with some familiarity. At one point, acknowledging the Lord's dispositive role, he refers to Him as "The Great Director". His image of God as "The Divine Projectionist", in whose hands "the reels nearest 'The End' . . . move more swiftly" strikes a rather less respectful note.

He apparently acknowledged no contradiction in putting himself to the Lord's service and in reaping the millions accruing from it. Nor does he find any error in his films' tendency to dwell unnecessarily upon the sins of the flesh. (*The Sign of the Cross* is, after all, one of the most fleshly films to be allowed by censorship bodies.) "I am not prudish in matters of either life or art," he explains. "You cannot have drama without conflict, and the age-old conflict of good and evil demands that evil should be shown clearly for what it is."

In any event, his films seem to have given him complete satisfaction:

For a time in 1935 Mrs. deMille and I even discussed retiring from motion pictures altogether. I had directed sixty films in all. Most of them, we felt, were a credit to us.

It was inevitable, perhaps, that politically he found himself on the side of the Right and the Establishment, and much of his later life was dedicated to the deMille Foundation for Political Freedom, an organisation set up to fight union regulation of labour. Some of his views are revealing:

Of Chaplin: "I detest his politics."

Of Sam Wood: "One of the staunchest fighters against the inroads of communism in the motion picture industry." (DeMille makes no mention, oddly enough, of the 1947 Un-American Activities Committee.)

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Of Calvary: "... a few unrepresentative, corrupt, religious leaders and the callous and cowardly Roman government."

Of Will Hays: "... unbounded energy, skill and dedication, which served the industry with great distinction and great success."

DeMille was one of the framers of the Hays Code, and his view of it reveals his sense of the oneness of deMille, the Republicans and the Lord:

There is room, I think, for modification in the Code from time to time, in those sections of it which deal with specifics. But its basic principles have been valid since they were revealed on Mount Sinai.

The geniality of this Autobiography does not, I feel, reveal the deMille personality directly, any more than the pictures—the author posing, reverential or shark-smiled, as may be appropriate to Pope Pius, Billy Graham, the Queen, Jerry Lewis, Charlton Heston, or ascending Mount Sinai on a camel. But one senses a genuine sentimental capacity for affection, and a fairly titanic conceit (the self-conscious attempts at self-depreciation are not serious, and he rarely mentions his critics without venom). He unconvincingly rationalises the extravagances of the deMille legend (the boots were adopted "as a protection against snakes, scorpions, cactus or poison oak"; the famous "chairboys" understand that "that particular job is an unequalled opportunity to learn the business of production and direction").

But perhaps the magnetic ferocity of this dynamic little man is best revealed in the way his influence has survived the grave, to prompt from Mr. Donald Hayne the most nervously sycophantic footnotes with which an editor could honour his author.

DAVID ROBINSON

A PICTURE HISTORY OF THE CINEMA, by Ernest Lindgren. Illustrated. (Vista Books, 35s.)

THE CHARM OF THIS BOOK, with its 466 illustrations, is that it can be enjoyed in so many ways: skimmed through, with an eye for recognitions and oddities (here are the Odessa steps; but who's this?—Mauritz Stiller, discoverer of Garbo); or wallowed in as the panorama it is; or torn to bits for its omissions, failures in criticism, and too familiar stills.

It's only too easy to do the last. Directors more or less overlooked range from Murnau, Wajda and Franju to Fellini and Preston Sturges. Laurel and Hardy aren't mentioned or seen. Of *Zéro de Conduite*: "Nevertheless it was a promising and often entertaining experiment." No comment on *Grapes of Wrath*, but *The Informer* "survives as one of Ford's finest films and a classic of the American cinema." (Can Mr. Lindgren have seen it lately?) Then of Disney we are told of the rise, but nothing about the decline; *The Gold Rush* is picked as Chaplin's favourite because he reissued it, but by this criterion he has many favourites; no comment for *Un Condamné à Mort s'est Echappé*; only long cast lists for *Nothing Sacred* and *Seven Samurai*; six illustrations given each to David Lean and Harry Watt, one to Ophüls, none to Truffaut, Ozu, Goshö, etc.

However, a history in pictures with compartments of text is bound to be a compromise, and one should enjoy here the easy synopticism rather than look for strict perspectives or critical edge. And certainly we are given plenty to look at, much information and guidance. The difficulties in compiling this sort of book are enormous, the pleasures immediate; and perhaps one shouldn't ask for more.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

BOOKS RECEIVED

ABC OF FILM AND TELEVISION WORKING TERMS. By Oswald Skilbeck. (Focal Press, 17s. 6d.)

AGEE ON FILM, VOLUME II. Five film scripts by James Agee. (McDowell, Obolensky, New York. \$7.50.)

ERIC VON STROHEIM. By Bob Bergut. (Le Terrain Vague, Paris.)

LES FONDEMENTS DE L'ART CINEMATOGRAPHIQUE. By J. R. Debré. (Editions du Cerf, Paris.)

MEMOIRS OF A PROFESSIONAL CAD. By George Sanders. (Hamish Hamilton, 16s.)

THE ODYSSEY OF A FILM-MAKER. By Frances Hubbard Flaherty. (Beta Phi Mu, University of Illinois. \$3.00.)

LE SUNLIGHT D'AUSTERLITZ. By Nelly Kaplan. (Librairie Plon, Paris.)

Correspondence

The Dead Hand

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,—Having some knowledge of the events that led to the financing of Norman Vane's *Conscience Bay*, I would like to comment on Walter Lassally's article "The Dead Hand".

It seems to me that the producer whose approach is non-conformist is immediately involved in a vicious circle. If he wishes to make a film within the normal channels available for film finance then he will be subject to the pressures that all professional film makers enjoy (!?). And he cannot make one outside the "system" (and so keep his costs lower) for the unions will not permit this.

Some way must be found to break this cycle. Who is the most likely to be tractable, labour or management? I believe that the answer is, and should be, labour. If the unions, in collaboration with the employers (the B.F.P.A. and F.B.F.M.), could define a specific category of film in which the intention of the makers is obviously aesthetic and/or experimental and relax their requirements as regards minimum crew, etc., then I am convinced that all else would follow.

To achieve this object the following conditions would be necessary:—

- (1) The maximum budget would have to be around £20,000.
- (2) The producer and director would have to take minimum fees and a percentage of the production profits as their reward.
- (3) It would be advantageous if any NFFC involvement would rank *pari passu* for recoupment with any other investors.
- (4) It would also be helpful if the distributors would cut their distribution fee to, say, 20 per cent.
- (5) The ACT, NATKE and ETU to agree to an absolute minimum "shorts" crew.

It will be seen that all these conditions are interdependent. Point (5) would only be agreed on condition that the other four points were fulfilled. Then it would be possible for films that are original in their conception to be made for a low enough figure to persuade those timid creatures, the financiers, to come out into the open.

Yours faithfully,

DAVID DEUTSCH.

113 Wardour Street,
London, W.1.

SIR,—Mr. Lassally's article "The Dead Hand" is crammed full of truth, and badly needed saying. The industry in this country is in the stranglehold of men who are only interested in what comes through the little glass window. Film rights actually change hands over public bars or are touted like insurance policies. Even if television had not come on the scene when it did, the industry was destined to crumble because all the big production companies and distributors could only think in terms of a ready-made film, for a ready-made distribution set-up, for a ready-made audience. This unfortunate trend has landed us in our present state.

This body the Big Men call "the public" is, in fact, a changing, fluid, unpredictable human being; because he likes *The Bowery Boys* does not mean he won't enjoy *Wild Strawberries*. True, there are gaps between so-called "commercial" and "artistic" Cinema, and I do not for a moment suggest that all the working man needs is a bit of culture to have him at the Academy or Curzon with every change of programme.

But this business of deciding what will and will not "go" with "them" is a shortsighted way for those in control to behave. I am in distribution myself and can assure the Wardour Street arbiters that it is *mistrust* that keeps people away from their box-offices. This "public" simply will not be manipulated. By that I mean no-one will pay money to be fooled; *Blood of the Vampire* one week and *Les Amants* the next produces the kind of rebellion a child experiences when confronted with a spoon of cod-liver oil instead of the lollipop it has been promised.

Television can be silenced by the flick of a switch or one channel can be substituted for another: there is always the opportunity to make one's "gesture". With the cinema one's gesture is simply not

to go any more—one cannot experiment with something over which one has no control. Neither can one be selective. Publicity is as lurid and non-informative for *Les Amants* as it is for *Blood of the Vampire*. Only full-time research yields results these days and I venture to think that many people have neither the time nor the inclination to take cinema-going so seriously.

One way to save the industry is to allow greater flexibility of programming within the Circuits. But if this cannot be, one can only hope that the voice of the Independents (film-makers, distributors and exhibitors) will eventually equal the dwindling number of Circuit voices. Then, at least, the cinema will be at the crossroads and not, as it is now, down a blind alley.

These are my own views and do not necessarily represent those of the firm for which I work.

Yours faithfully,

PHILIP JENKINSON.

Contemporary Films Ltd.,
14 Soho Square,
London, W.1.

Museum of Modern Art

SIR,—If Miss Starr was trying to annoy me in your last issue, she succeeded. But she knows better. What she is perhaps not prepared to acknowledge is that the Film Library need not invariably pattern its activities on her own rather specialised opinions and tastes. The Museum of Modern Art serves a large public with varied interests.

For the record, the reader might like to see a list of the film series and special events presented at the Museum over the past three years.

Series: Past and Present: A Selection of German Films (new and old); The First Sixty Years; The Films of Fred Zinnemann; Recent Acquisitions; The Films of Paul Rotha; The Films of Sergei Eisenstein; Marlene Dietrich: Image and Legend; John Ford: Nine Films; Ten Post-war Polish Films; The National Film Board of Canada. **Special Events:** An Evening with Marlene Dietrich (in person); An Evening of Puerto Rican Films; Prospects for the Film; The Saturday Morning Film Series, a continuing review of the entire Film Library collection for the staff and film students; The American Film, a series of 12 half-hour television programmes reviewing American film history, consisting of excerpts from films in the collection, with comment by the curator and guest appearances by Lillian Gish, Mrs. Robert Flaherty, Arthur Mayer, Mrs. Samuel Goldwyn and King Vidor, broadcast from Station WPIX under the auspices of the Museum and of the New York Regents Educational Television Project; American premières of *Power Among Men*, *Apur Sansar*, *Der Hauptmann von Koepenick*, *Ashes and Diamonds* and the reconstructed *Dreigroschenoper*; and three annual conferences of motion picture educators, addressed by Arthur Mayer, John Houseman, Dore Schary, Jean Renoir, Archer Winsten, and others.

Series in work and scheduled for the next three years include: The Contemporary American Screen, 1948–1958; The Films of Luis Buñuel; The Japanese Film; The Swedish Film; United Nations Films; The Danish Film.

Yours faithfully,

RICHARD GRIFFITH.

Curator of the Film Library.

The Museum of Modern Art,
New York, 19.

The Players' Witness

SIR,—I feel it would be a great disservice to theatrical history if David Robinson's article "The Players' Witness" was allowed to pass without comment, and I would appreciate the space to make the following corrections: Ellen Terry certainly made more than one film. Following *Her Greatest Performance* (1916) she appeared in *The Invasion of Britain* (1918). This ill-fated production, directed by Herbert Brenon for the Ministry of Information, was never released, but a single reel has survived and is preserved by the National Film Archive. In 1920 she starred in Ibsen's *Pillars of Society* and in 1922 she made *Potter's Clay*, both of which apparently have not survived. In the same year she appeared as the nurse in *The Bohemian Girl*, featuring Ivor Novello, Gladys Cooper and Constance Collier. A copy of this film, unfortunately minus one reel, has also found its way into the Archive.

A 35 mm. copy of Tolstoy's *Polikushka* (1919), featuring I. M. Moskvina, was received by the Archive in 1951 and a copy has been shown at the National Film Theatre. I would also like to point out that it was G. Hay Plumb who directed Forbes-Robertson's *Hamlet* and not Cecil Hepworth.

Mr. Robinson places great emphasis on the Russian actors, yet ignores such famous foreign players as Cécile Sorel (*La Tosca*, 1909), Harry Baur (*Shylock*, 1913), Ermete Novelli (*Re Lear* and *Il Mercante*

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The festival, now in its fourth year, is organised by the British Film Institute in association with the London County Council and with the support of the British Film Industry.

This, the festival of festivals, includes outstanding films from over thirty different countries, the majority of which have been shown at this year's other international film festivals such as Cannes, Berlin, Venice and Karlovy Vary

INFORMATION

Write to the National Film Theatre after the 5th October.

Box Office for Members only opens on the 5th October.

Box Office for General Public opens on the 13th October.

Special prices and facilities for members

Details of programmes available from the 5th October in the Members' Booklet and the national newspapers.

de Venezia, 1910), Amletto Novelli (*Il Pasto de Leoni*, 1912) and Yvette Guilbert (*Faust*, 1926)—all of whom are recorded in these films at the vaults in Aston Clinton.

Although the performances of Mrs. Patrick Campbell and the earlier performances of Nazimova are not to be found at Aston Clinton, your readers may be pleased to know that *Crime and Punishment* (1936) and *Camille* (1922) are held by the Czech and Yugoslav archives respectively.

As Mr. Robinson points out, cataloguing is an elaborate, costly and time-consuming business, and it is our regret that our collection is not as adequately catalogued as we would wish. Where, however, the information is available, I feel it should be brought to the attention of your readers.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID GRENFELL,
Chief Cataloguer.

National Film Archive.

DAVID ROBINSON writes: *I am glad to discover my error about Ellen Terry's cinema career and sorry for the injustices I have done the Archive—the result of using Mr. Grenfell's own catalogue, which, as he points out, is not as adequate as he would wish. Clearly, however, artists like Yvette Guilbert did not come within the range of the article, so theatrical history has not after all been quite as ill-served as Mr. Grenfell fears.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Stills:
20th CENTURY-FOX for *Let's Make Love*, *Sanctuary*.
UNITED ARTISTS for *Kiss Me Deadly*, *Studs Lonigan*, *Elmer Gantry*.
PARAMOUNT PICTURES for *Vertigo*, *The Naked Jungle*, *Psycho*.
WARNER BROTHERS for *The Big Sleep*.
RKO-RADIO PICTURES for *Wagonmaster*, *They Live By Night*.
METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER for *Party Girl*.
BRITISH LION for *Shadows*, *The Entertainer*.
RANK FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *The Savage Innocents*.
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ROME-PARIS FILMS for *Lola*.
PRODUCTIONS GEORGES DE BEAUREGARD for *Le Petit Soldat*.
NOUVELLES EDITIONS DE FILM for *Zazie dans le Métro*.
SILVA FILM for *La Notte*.
TITANUS for *Rocco and his Brothers*.
CZECHOSLOVAK STATE FILM for *Smyk*, *Romeo, Juliet and Darkness*.
MOSFILM for *Seriozha*, *White Nights*.
BRASIL FILMS for *Ravina*.
OSCAR DANCIGERS for *Cumbres Borrascosas*.
CHILE FILM for *La Dama de la Muerte*.
ARGENTINA SONOFILM for *El Secuestrador*.
PRODUCTIONNES ANGEL for *Un Guapo del 900*.
CINEBRAS for *Na Garganta do Diabo*.
FILMS OF POLAND for *Eroica*, *Lotna*, *Night Train*, *A Place in the World*.
SHOCHIKU for *Ningen no Joken*.
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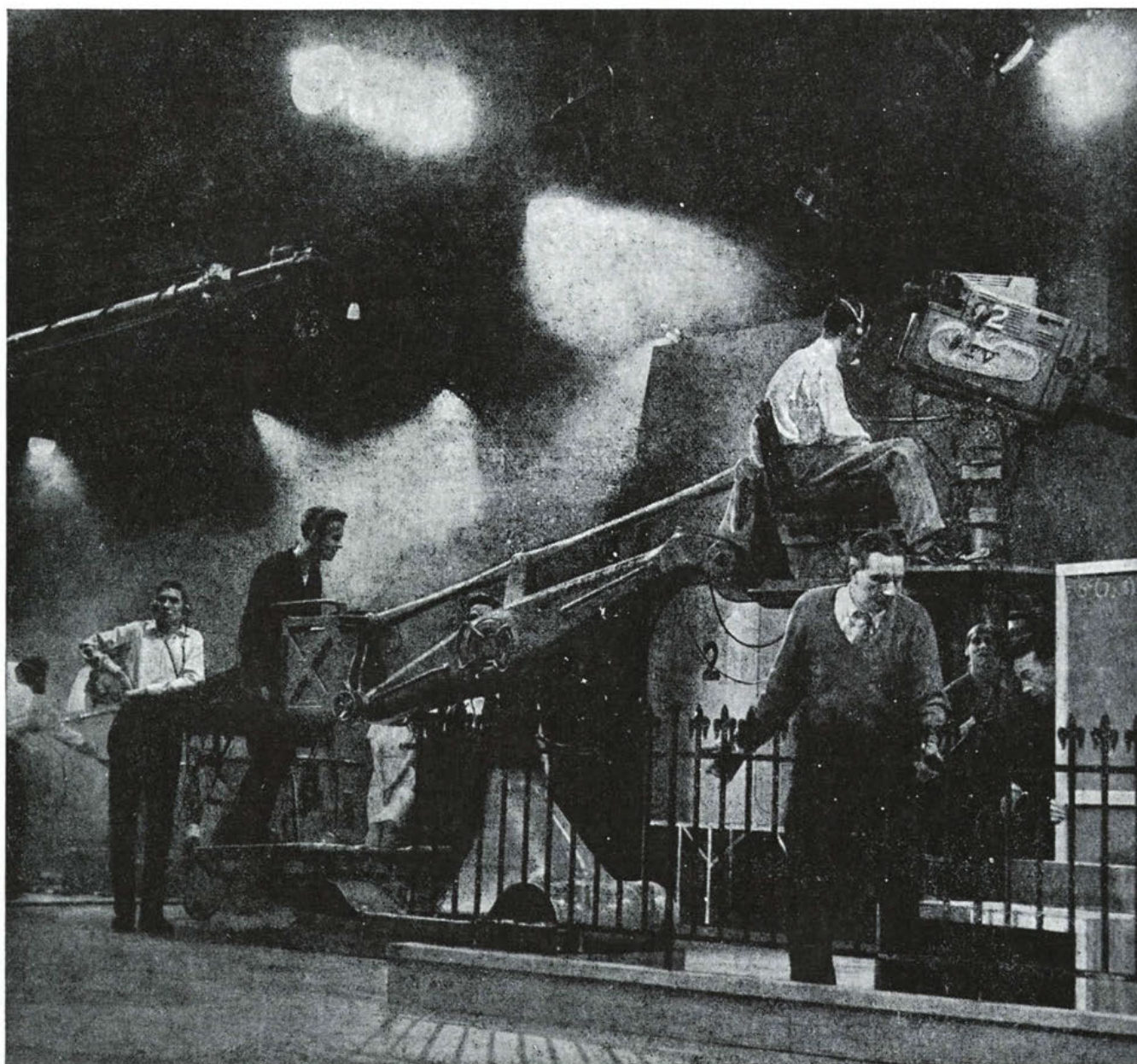
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A GUIDE TO CURRENT FILMS

Films likely to be of special interest to *SIGHT AND SOUND* readers are denoted by one, two or three stars

ALL THE YOUNG MEN (Columbia) Rawly self-assertive Korean war film, with white-versus-negro tensions among the U.S. platoon and some dismally ferocious battle scenes. (Alan Ladd, Sidney Poitier, James Darren, Mort Sahl; director, Hall Bartlett.)

ANNA OF BROOKLYN (Columbia) A widowed Lollobrigida returns to her native village in search of a second husband. Trivial Italian yarn spun around mainly comic-opera characters. (Dale Robertson, Vittorio De Sica, Amedeo Nazzari; directors, Reginald Denham and Carlo Lastricati. Technicolor, Technirama.)

***APARTMENT, THE** (United Artists) Billy Wilder's comedy about a soft-centred insurance clerk who shoots up the salary scale by turning his flat into a love-nest for philandering executives. Farce, sentiment and tough satire shaken into a rather dubious cocktail. (Jack Lemmon, Shirley MacLaine, Fred MacMurray. Panavision.) *Reviewed.*

***BELLS ARE RINGING** (M-G-M) Adaptation by Comden and Green of their own stage musical about a girl who works for a telephone answering service. Judy Holliday's single-handed attempt to cover up for Minnelli's conspicuous fatigue merits admiration. (Dean Martin, Fred Clark. Metrocolor, CinemaScope.)

***BEN-HUR** (M-G-M) Out of 5 years' preparation, 6½ months' shooting at Cinecittà, 40,000 tons of sand and a sea of blood and Camera 65 celluloid, director William Wyler has fished a memorable 9-minute chariot race, some Victorian scripture-book frescoes and an unexpectedly forceful Messala from Stephen Boyd. (Charlton Heston, Jack Hawkins, Hugh Griffith, Haya Harareet. Technicolor, Panavision.)

***BLACK ORPHEUS** (R. D. Purie/Curzon) Marcel Camus's 1959 Cannes prize-winner. A modern version of the Orpheus legend, set in Rio de Janeiro with lashings of carnival, but uneasy in its blend of spectacle, myth and melodrama. (Marpessa Dawn, Breno Mello. Eastman Colour.)

CAN-CAN (Fox) Mercilessly over-played and overstuffed version of Cole Porter's 1953 musical, made worse by tired singing and a hideous Adam and Eve ballet. (Shirley MacLaine, Frank Sinatra, Maurice Chevalier, Louis Jourdan; director, Walter Lang. Technicolor, Todd-AO.)

COME DANCE WITH ME (Columbia) Sleek, sometimes cheaply contrived *policiér* with Brigitte Bardot following a bizarre murder trail leading to a club for homosexuals and transvestites. (Henri Vidal, Dawn Addams; director, Michel Boisrond. Technicolor.)

***CRIMINAL, THE** (Anglo-Amalgamated) Unusually hard and suitably violent investigation of English prisons and their habitués. Muscular script by Alun Owen, explosively directed by Joseph Losey. (Stanley Baker, Margit Saad, Sam Wanamaker, Gregoire Aslan.) *Reviewed.*

****ENTERTAINER, THE** (British Lion/Bryanston) Less satisfying than *Look Back in Anger*, but still streets ahead of the average British film. Apart from a concentration on brilliant individual scenes, settings and performances at the expense of the whole, one's main feeling about the director, Tony Richardson, is that he is marking time. (Laurence Olivier, Joan Plowright, Roger Livesey, Brenda de Banzie.) *Reviewed.*

FRENCH MISTRESS, A (British Lion) The Boulting Brothers' latest, a farce about a French girl's descent on an English public school. Occasional dry humour, relaxed playing from Cecil Parker and James Robertson Justice, but the situations could hardly be more time-worn. (Ian Bannen, Agnès Laurent; director, Roy Boulting.)

***FUGITIVE KIND, THE** (United Artists) Solemnly embalmed version of Tennessee Williams' over-written play *Orpheus Descending*, distinguished by Boris Kaufman's photography and Marlon Brando's gift for luminous silences. (Anna Magnani, Joanne Woodward; director, Sidney Lumet.)

GAME OF LOVE, THE (Gala) Namely *L'Eau à la Bouche*. Sex above and below stairs in a French chateau: imitative, scrappy, full of specious virtuosity—for once a really bad New Wave film. (Bernadette Lafont, Françoise Brion, Alexandra Stewart; director, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze.)

***HOME FROM THE HILL** (M-G-M) Florid family saga of two generations' involved and illicit affairs in the Deep South. Biblical overtones, a feverish climax in Minnelli's latest manner, and a redeeming, natural performance by George Peppard. (Robert Mitchum, George Hamilton, Eleanor Parker. Metrocolor, CinemaScope.)

***IN SIX EASY LESSONS** (Mondial) Slim, though mettlesome, boulevard farce, stylishly over-played by Dany Robin, Fernand Gravey and Odette Laure and agreeably interrupted by Darryl Cowl. Direction unashamedly theatrical, but affectionate and assured. (Director, Jacqueline Audry.)

***IT STARTED IN NAPLES** (Paramount) Gay if unoriginal comedy about an American lawyer's encounter in Italy with a 9-year-old delinquent and a volatile dancer. Its basic gag—American puritanism versus Italian abandon—is overstretched, but Sophia Loren fans shouldn't be disappointed. (Clark Gable, Vittorio De Sica; director, Melville Shavelson. Technicolor, VistaVision.)

LET NO MAN WRITE MY EPITAPH (Columbia) Dismayingly old-fashioned social conscience melodrama about a slum prodigy and his junkie mum, inexplicably well-acted by James Darren, Shelley Winters and Burl Ives. (Jean Seberg, Ricardo Montalban, Ella Fitzgerald; director, Philip Leacock.)

***LET'S MAKE LOVE** (Fox) Gossamer backstage musical about a French tycoon who wins a down-town revue actress by posing as his stage "double". George Cukor's stylish handling, one or two characteristic Jack Cole numbers and the gay teaming of Marilyn Monroe with Yves Montand make it all seem infinitely better than it is. (Tony Randall, Frankie Vaughan. DeLuxe Color, CinemaScope.) *Reviewed.*

OCEAN'S ELEVEN (Warner-Pathé) Comedy-thriller with songs about American "League of Gentlemen's" raid on five Las Vegas casinos. Disappointingly limp handling by Lewis Milestone. (Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Peter Lawford, Sammy Davis, Jr. Technicolor, Panavision.)

PICCADILLY THIRD STOP (Rank) Smooth and sleazy thriller with a wide-boy hero, William Hartnell as a safecracker colonel, desperately contemporary props and a Tube tunnel climax. (Terence Morgan, Yoko Tani, Mai Zetterling, John Crawford; director, Wolf Rilla.)

****PICKPOCKET** (Mondial) Bresson's controversial, finally evasive spiritual study of a wallet-snatcher. Made with the usual documentary flair, non-acting and forceful marriage of images with sound. (Martin Lassalle, Pierre Leymarie, Pegleg.) *Reviewed.*

POLLYANNA (Disney) Straight re-make of the Mary Pickford classic about an orphan who dragoons an entire township of stuffy adults into philanthropy by teaching them the "glad game". Hayley Mills does wonders with the little monster. (Jane Wyman, Karl Malden, Adolphe Menjou; director, David Swift. Technicolor.)

****SHADOWS** (British Lion) John Cassavetes' forcefully improvised description of New York nights, love and the loneliness of a young Negro. A casual, fragmentary, absolutely contemporary example of non-Hollywood American cinema. (Ben Carruthers, Anthony Ray, Lelia Goldoni.) *Reviewed.*

SONG WITHOUT END (Columbia) A droopy-sleeved, *décolleté* Dirk Bogarde plays Liszt in a *legato* romantic confection, directed for the most part by George Cukor after Charles Vidor's death. (Capucine, Geneviève Page, Ivan Desny, Martita Hunt. Technicolor, CinemaScope.)

SOUTH PACIFIC (Fox) High, wide and generally unhandsome version of the stage musical, stodgily directed by Joshua Logan. Happily the songs survive a welter of eccentric colour effects and jungle décor. (Rossano Brazzi, Mitzi Gaynor, John Kerr. Technicolor, Todd-AO.)

SOUTH SEAS ADVENTURE (Cinerama) Two girls voyage from Los Angeles to Honolulu, taking in surf-riding, Tahiti, Queen Salote's tortoise, Fiji, man-hood initiation rites in the New Hebrides, Maoris and Bondi Beach lifeguards. One or two pretty views barely compensate for the sense of strain. (Commentary by Orson Welles; various directors. Technicolor, Cinerama.)

STRANGERS WHEN WE MEET (Columbia) Bleary-eyed magazine-type love story set in the smart, neurotic and adulterous suburbs. (Kirk Douglas, Kim Novak, Ernie Kovacs, Barbara Rush; director, Richard Quine. Technicolor, CinemaScope.)

SUBTERRANEANS, THE (M-G-M) Leslie Caron and George Peppard cruelly wusted on a silly, psychotically trimmed novelette about the "new bohemians" of San Francisco's North Beach area. (Janice Rule, Roddy McDowall; director, Randal MacDougall. Metrocolor, CinemaScope.)

SURPRISE PACKAGE (Columbia) Meandering comedy, with Yul Brynner as a gangster deported to Greece and plotting to steal the crown jewels of an ex-King. Noël Coward, more world-weary than ever, has a game try at making it all sound like a sophisticated romp. (Mitzi Gaynor; director, Stanley Donen.)

****TETTO, IL** (Gala) De Sica and Zavattini's 1956 return to neo-realism and Rome working-class life; polished, busy and brilliant, but irrevocably flawed by elaborate artifice and hints of patronage. (Gabriella Pallotti, Giorgio Listuzzi.)

THERE WAS A CROOKED MAN (United Artists) Norman Wisdom in a sometimes sluggish, occasionally funny comedy about a prison-loving crook who plans to dynamite a town and build a new one in its place at the expense of the U.S.A. (Alfred Marks, Andrew Cruickshank; director, Stuart Burge.)

THREE MOVES TO FREEDOM (Rank) Brand-new German *conte* telling how an Austrian intellectual outwitted his Gestapo gaolers. A promising idea, from a Stefan Zweig novel, thrown away by ponderous acting and writing and Gerd Oswald's increasingly light-headed direction. (Curd Jürgens, Claire Bloom, Hansjörg Felmy.)

TIME MACHINE, THE (M-G-M) Juvenile but ingenious George Pal version of Wells' science fiction, taking in atomic wars and a visit to year 802,701, when somnambulist girls and furry little men are the earth's main inhabitants. (Rod Taylor, Yvette Mimieux, Alan Young. Metrocolor.)

***VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED** (M-G-M) Genuinely frightening adaptation of John Wyndham's *The Midwich Cuckoos*, and possibly the neatest S-F film yet to have come out of a British studio. (George Sanders, Barbara Shelley, Michael Gwynn; director, Wolf Rilla.)

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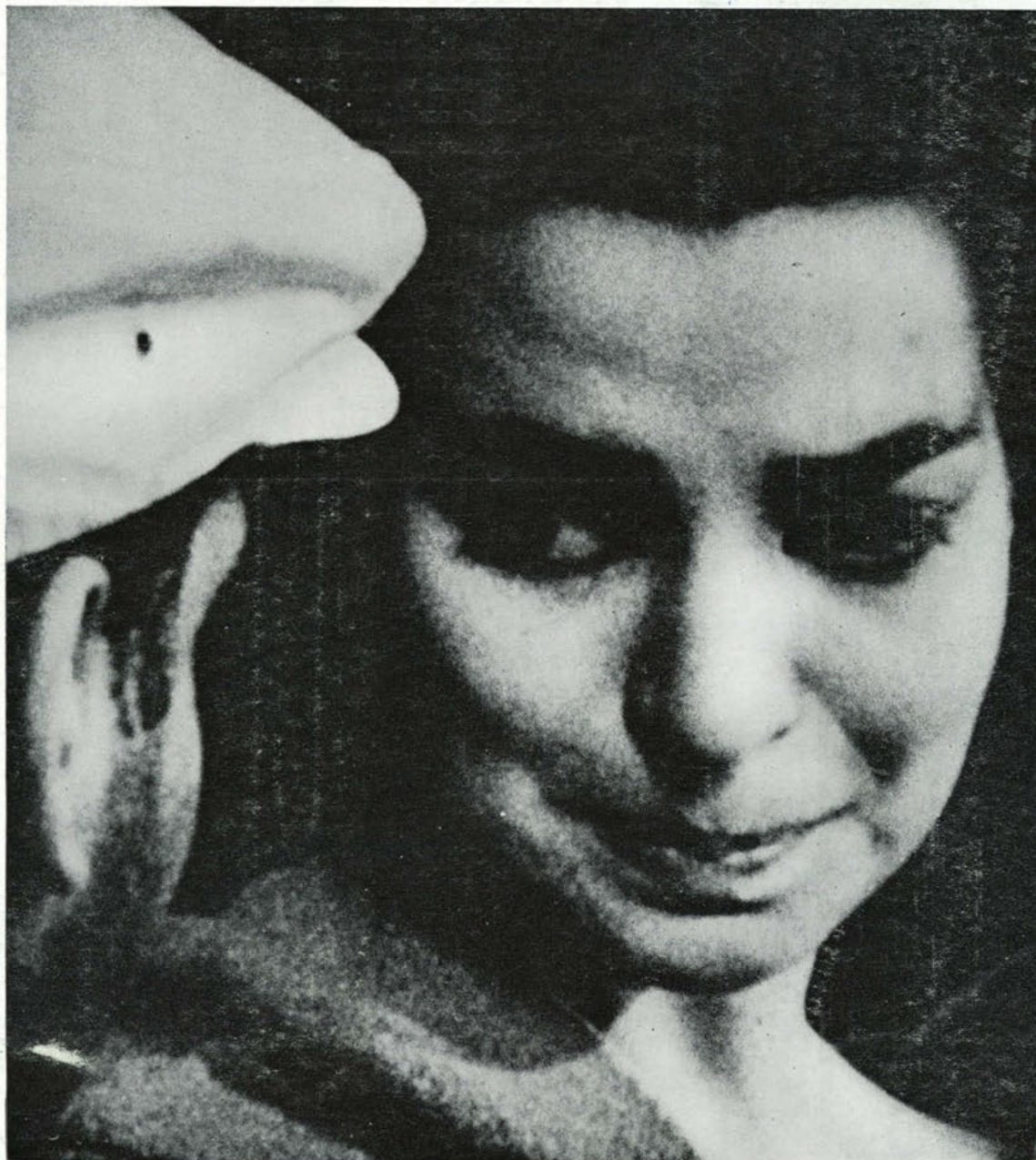
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